
* T A Y L O R O L O G Y *
* A Continuing Exploration of the Life and Death of William Desmond Taylor *
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* TAYLOROLOGY may be freely distributed *

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What is TAYLOROLOGY?

TAYLOROLOGY is a newsletter focusing on the life and death of William Desmond Taylor, a top Paramount film director in early Hollywood who was shot to death on February 1, 1922. His unsolved murder was one of Hollywood's major scandals. This newsletter will deal with: (a) The facts of Taylor's life; (b) The facts and rumors of Taylor's murder; (c) The impact of the Taylor murder on Hollywood and the nation; (d) Taylor's associates and the Hollywood silent film industry in which Taylor worked. Primary emphasis will be given toward reprinting, referencing and analyzing source material, and sifting it for accuracy.

Review: "Balboa Films"

We were eagerly awaiting publication of the book BALBOA FILMS: A HISTORY AND FILMOGRAPHY OF THE SILENT FILM STUDIO, by Jean-Jacques Jura and Rodney Norman Bardin II (McFarland, 1999). We were hopeful that it would throw some

additional insight into William Desmond Taylor's professional or personal life during the time that Taylor worked for Balboa, from June to November 1914. Unfortunately, although the book devotes nearly ten pages to Taylor, it adds nothing of significance to his historical record and contains a number of inaccuracies. The book's authors relied heavily on Giroux's book *A DEED OF DEATH* for the Taylor material, and were evidently totally unaware of *WILLIAM DESMOND TAYLOR: A DOSSIER* (which had an appendix listing errors in Giroux's book--Taylor's first Balboa film was not "The Awakening," and when Taylor left Balboa he went next to Favorite Players, not to American Film). Also, the Taylor/Balboa filmography in *BALBOA FILMS* is less accurate and less inclusive than the the Taylor/Balboa filmography in *WILLIAM DESMOND TAYLOR: A DOSSIER*. *BALBOA FILMS* even scrambles the dates when Taylor was working for Balboa, erroneously dating a clipping which supposedly places Taylor with Balboa in January 1914, during which time he was actually living and working in Santa Monica, for Vitagraph. Probably the book's biggest omission regarding Taylor is failing to mention that Taylor directed the feature "Rose of the Alley", starring Jackie Saunders. (One contemporary source crediting Taylor was reprinted in *TAYLOROLOGY* 74.) *BALBOA FILMS* states that Taylor directed "The Awakening", and "A Great Secret", but we have never seen any contemporary information crediting him with either; on the contrary, we saw clippings that Edwin August was directing his own Balboa films, and in all Taylor's extensive personal publicity he never claimed to have directed Edwin August. Those two films were also not mentioned in the Taylor filmography researched by Alan Gevinson. On the other hand, in addition to "Rose of the Alley," Gevinson's filmography for Taylor included "At Police Headquarters," "Reformation," and "The Cost of Crime" (possibly all three were different working titles for the same film), none of which were mentioned in the *BALBOA FILMS* book. *BALBOA FILMS* devotes most of its Taylor pages to Taylor's life story and the murder, which occurred seven years after Taylor left Balboa, and repeats other inaccuracies found in *A DEED OF DEATH*.

Our hope was that *BALBOA FILMS* would fill at least a gap or two regarding Taylor's career at Balboa. Instead, *BALBOA FILMS* represents a step

backward in Taylor scholarship. (Of course the book has considerable value in non-Taylor aspects of film history.)

"Balboa Films": Response from the Authors

A copy of the above review was sent to the authors of BALBOA FILMS, and they responded with the following letter, which is included here with their permission.

* * * * *

Dear Mr. Long,

You are very kind to have given us notice of your review before making it public. Obviously, you are a gentleman who believes in fair play. In this response, Mr. Bardin joins me in thanking you for the opportunity to make a few remarks on behalf of our book BALBOA FILMS.

First of all, the purpose of our book has been to document a missing chapter in film history. Till now, most film historians have considered Balboa Studios minor as a pioneering film plant. In time, our book might very well change that perspective. To that purpose, we have written the first and only book on Balboa, while making bold claims about this forgotten jewel of the silent era, inviting our readers to rediscover the rich contributions and innovations that took place at the Long Beach film plant, between 1911 and 1922. Secondly, we also wanted to showcase some of the key figures at Balboa, like William Desmond Taylor, using their fascinating careers as examples to make this history come alive.

Of course, it goes without saying, that we wish we had known of your research earlier. You are definitely the expert par excellence on William Desmond Taylor, as we consider ourselves the experts on Balboa Studios. In any case, research on both Balboa Studios and Taylor complement each other. In other words, our book and your web site, along with your publications, help promote each other, enhancing Taylor's reputation through his association with Balboa, where he got his start as a film director.

Most unfortunately, we did not come across your book during our research. While doing research at various venues, we combed diligently through the Balboa scrapbook, spending many weeks at the Historical Society of Long Beach, and that scrapbook became our greatest resource in making specific additions regarding Taylor's debut as a director, during his tenure at Balboa. At the time, apart from the scrapbook, we only had Giroux's book on Taylor, *A Deed of Death*, which barely mentioned Taylor's association with Balboa Studios.

For example, from the scrapbook, p. 105, we learnt that William Desmond Taylor was director for *A Great Secret*, a three-reel drama (White Star), made for William Fox, released October 19, 1914. On the same page in the scrapbook, I found an unidentified article that gave the plot to the story. You can find this filmography entry in our book on p. 217.

In addition, on page 201 in our book, we explain that the same scrapbook, p. 101, provided us with Taylor's name as director for *The Awakening*, a three-reel drama (White Star), released October 5, 1914, made for William Fox, the same page providing us also a lengthy summary of the story. Here, in our filmography entry for *The Awakening*, we also refer to Robert Giroux's *A Deed of Death*, and included there Giroux's notion that Taylor made his directorial debut with this film.

Furthermore, thanks to your notices to us, we are now aware of a discrepancy

in our book about a date concerning Taylor tenure at Balboa--January 16, 1914. We too had found in the scrapbook, as you also noted, Taylor's joining Balboa in the month of June, 1914 (p. 45 of the scrapbook, page 82 in Balboa Films). I also have another article from the scrapbook out of the L. A. Tribune, dated January 16, 1914, about the trip with Taylor, Saunders, Manning, et al. to Chatsworth Park. When I return from my trip, after July 22, 1999, I'll go back to the Historical Society to verify the date for that trip to Chatsworth Park. As you said "January 16, 1914" doesn't jive with the timeline of Taylor's tenure at Balboa, starting in June, 1914.

As you include in your MS Word file via e-mail [containing the Taylor-at-Balboa portion of WILLIAM DESMOND TAYLOR: A DOSSIER], we also had stated in our book that Taylor was the first Vice President of the Photoplayers Club. In fact, by carefully gleaning the scrapbook, we had all the same films in our filmography as you listed--The Criminal Code, Rose of the Alley, The Judge's Wife, An Eye for An Eye, Tricks of Fate, Dividing Walls, A House Divided, The Man with the Green Eyes, except for our inclusion of The Awakening and A Great Secret, and except for our exclusion of the titles you include--The Price of Crime (or The Cost of Crime), Reformation, and At Police Headquarters. While we included in our filmography Rose of the Alley and a summary found in the scrapbook, we had not identified it as having had Taylor as director, and the same is true in our listing of The House Divided, though we were happy to discover that Rose of the Alley was one of the scenarios written by Jackie Saunders. In brief, we used the resources in the scrapbook thoroughly and cautiously, happy to be able to identify so many works associated with Taylor at Balboa, but as you might remember, some bits and pieces of the same film were scattered in many parts of the scrapbook. Consequently, you have meticulously gleaned some details we had omitted about Taylor's work embedded in that scrapbook, but then our filmography does include most of the same details, as well as fresh bits of information retrieved from the same scrapbook not made public for 85 years, until the publication of BALBOA FILMS.

I suspect there is more that could be said about the adventure of putting this book together, a true labor of love, including the years of deep digging, while sifting and putting together many tiny grains from scattered sources. Mr. Taylor was a fascinating romantic figure, associated with Balboa's meteoric success, and Taylor was a complex personality, "a director extraordinaire," who merited the ten pages we devoted to him. You may have noticed we converted about five of those ten pages into a screenplay to create a filmic touch in our treatment of Taylor. Frankly, we wanted to honor Taylor as a key director in early Hollywood who deserves much attention and more research to follow, beyond his tenure at Balboa. To that purpose, in the bigger picture of our complete history of Balboa Studios, we hope also to trigger more reader response, like your own. We only regret we didn't know earlier of your voluminous work on Taylor, since, together, our combined research and publications provide much that corroborates, with the shared goal of promoting further study into the fascinating pioneers of early Hollywood, those brave 'sailors of fortune' who transformed Southern California into the film capital of the world.

Sincerely and gratefully yours,

Jean-Jacques Jura & Rodney Bardin
Co-Authors of Balboa Films

Charlotte Shelby's 1929 Statement

In 1929 Charlotte Shelby made her first public statement regarding the Taylor murder. It was reported in the press as follows:

* * * * *

December 24, 1929

LOS ANGELES EXAMINER

...[Statement by Charlotte Shelby:]

"After seven years of silence, I now unsolicited give my first published statement regarding reference made to me in connection with the death of William Desmond Taylor.

"I feel in justice to myself, my name, my integrity, my rights as a citizen of the United States, that I must express my indignation at the injustice done me.

"I returned from Europe, after three and a half years spent in search of health, on November the seventeenth of this year.

"I am glad to be in Los Angeles, now that the Taylor case is reopened, as my name has been published as one of the possible suspects concerning Mr. Taylor's death.

"I have been maligned, and by innuendo, directly or indirectly, implicated in connection with the tragedy.

"There is not one single word of truth in anything that has been said concerning me with the case, nor has any public official the slightest evidence which would serve in any way to prove, or even indicate that I ever did have, or now have information which would lead to the arrest of the person responsible for Mr. Taylor's death.

"There was reference in the newspapers Saturday intimating that the district attorney's office sought to connect with the Taylor case 'a person who had left the United States.'

"If this refers to me, I am here and desirous of a full investigation and vindication of my name and to stop the circulation of insinuations that have been repeatedly made that I am one of four persons implicated.

"I have nothing to conceal. I am willing, and always have been, to talk to any authorized person from the district attorney's office, and will repeat to the district attorney what I am saying now, if he wishes to see me.

"In 1926, when my name was first connected with the case, I made requests on Asa Keyes, when he was district attorney, to issue a statement in justice to me.

"I made this request through my attorney, and it was after the greatest difficulty that Mr. Keyes consented to see me, and then upon his own conditions--that is, he would not receive me in his office, nor in any public place, nor with the knowledge of the press.

"I told him of my every action the day preceding the tragedy, and of the following day of the tragedy, and of the day following.

"I told Mr. Keyes where I had spent the evening and with whom.

"My attorney and I invited his questioning me, thereupon demanding a statement vindicating me.

"His statement was promised within three days, but I was unable to get this satisfaction.

"I now appeal as a woman of honor and integrity, one who never wronged anyone, contrary to all reports to the public, for justice and to clear my name of slander and misrepresentation.

"I am now reestablishing my home in Los Angeles.

"I feel I have a right to live peacefully and enjoy the confidence and respect of my fellow men."

* * * * *

December 24, 1929

LOS ANGELES TIMES

...Mrs. Shelby declared in her statement that, at her request, she had made a complete statement of her connection with the case to Asa Keyes, when the latter was District Attorney.

"That statement was taken down by a reporter and took the form of an official document," she declared last night. "It explains my every movement at the time the murder was committed. It was taken in the presence of Attorney John Mott and Mr. Keyes and, I presume, is a matter of record in the

District Attorney's office.

"Despite rumors, all my dealings with Mr. Taylor before his death were almost exclusively business. I only met him socially on one or two occasions. I discussed business with him, as he was my daughter's director. I was naturally interested in the scenarios of pictures she was to appear in and read them with Mr. Taylor. He was present on one occasion when he gave a dinner to the cast of a picture in which Miss Minter was appearing. Outside of this, I knew nothing of Mr. Taylor's private life. I did not know his friends. I have no knowledge nor any opinion as to who may have killed him.

"Although I freely gave my statement to the authorities, from time to time innuendos have appeared that I was 'implicated' in the case. I resent that and believe that the time has come to insist on my complete vindication. I waited at home all day today hoping that Mr. Fitts would call me and grant me an interview, in order that the matter may be settled for once and for all. The call did not come, but I still believe that the District Attorney will grant the justice that is due me."

Mary Miles Minter's "Engagement" to William Desmond Taylor

In a written statement made in 1923, Mary Miles Minter stated that although she wanted to marry Taylor, he had never asked her to marry him--they were NOT engaged. She stated:

"We were never engaged in the sense that he had asked me to marry him and I had promised. I had always hoped that sometime we would be married. But I had planned in my own mind--never with Mr. Taylor--that as soon as I had made enough money so that mother and sister could be assured of a comfortable income for the rest of their lives--that perhaps we would be married. But not engaged in the sense of wearing a ring, or of telling one's friends of an intention to marry or of telling my mother. Marrying

Mr. Taylor was just my dream--a dream which, voiced to film, always met with the answer that it was impossible." [Los Angeles Times, August 15, 1923]

Yet in 1937 interviews, she stated that she "had been honorably engaged to marry him" (Taylor) and that they had become engaged on September 6, 1919. [See TAYLOROLOGY 74.]

On the surface, it would appear that these contradictory statements cannot both be true; either she was engaged to Taylor or she wasn't. Either the first statement distorted the truth or the second statement was only her fantasy. But perhaps further clarification can be found in a statement she made in the 1960's, wherein Minter described a conversation she had with Taylor:

"[Taylor said:] 'I know your mother fears I shall take you away from her. If she only knew, I'm her greatest ally, because with the discrepancy of our ages I'm not the right person for you. I love you more than anything else in the world, but I'm all too aware of the fact that I'm old enough to be your father. You want a home, a family of your own, a rural setting. Give yourself a fair chance. I love you enough to want your happiness above my own.' I told him that no thing, no amount of years or younger men or anything on earth would change my love for him. He looked at me a long, long time and finally said: 'Mary, you are my little white rose--I want you, I love you with all my heart and soul. Now listen earnestly to what I have to say. If you will really try to let some more suitable man capture your heart but by the time your contract is finished have not done so, then by the living God, I am going to claim you for my own. But this I require of you--that you give yourself a fair chance.' We sealed the pact with a kiss."

If the above statement is essentially accurate, then it gives additional insight into her relationship with Taylor, and would explain the earlier statements. If indeed Taylor made that statement, then it could easily be viewed both ways, depending on her state of mind when looking at the memory: (1) they were never engaged (since Taylor never asked her to marry him),

(2) they were indeed engaged (since Taylor promised her that if she followed those instructions then he would marry her after her contract expired).

Of course, even if Taylor made that statement, it does not prove that he meant it. He could well have been playing for time, figuring that in the next few years Minter would hopefully fall in love with someone else, someone closer to her own age; and that this statement would spare her the anguish (and tantrum) of an actual break-up between Minter and Taylor.

Needless to say, this is all just idle armchair speculation.

Reporting the Taylor Murder: Day Ten

Below are some highlights of the press reports published in the tenth day after Taylor's body was discovered.

* * * * *

February 11, 1922

Frank Bartholomew

PITTSBURGH SUN

Los Angeles, Feb. 11--District Attorney Woolwine, leading the manhunt for the murderer of William Desmond Taylor, was believed to have struck the straight trail today.

From out of the conflicting, tangled mass of evidence and suspicion the chief investigator emerged with three theories as to the three unknown quantities in the case--the assassin, the instigator, and the motive.

The slayer--now believed beyond all doubt to be the mysterious figure in muffler and cap seen leaving the dead director's home on the evening of the crime, lurked behind a clump of bushes while Taylor talked with Mabel Normand on the sidewalk before his residence, according to fresh evidence in

Woolwine's hands today.

The instigator--believed to have been a wealthy, jealous rival of Taylor, has been under constant surveillance by the police, and the sifting of statements of stars and leading lights of the film world yesterday at the district attorney's office, pointed still more directly to this young man.

The motive--which at first thought to be have been blackmail, has been definitely established as jealousy, the district attorney's office is convinced.

With these three leads, the district attorney's office was today definitely launched in an attempt to establish the theory that the murder was committed by order of a wealthy Easterner, jealous of an actress. Facts regarding three other suspects have been temporarily shelved, and all efforts are being concentrated upon evidence that will convict or exonerate the man in question...

The fact, disclosed by testimony reiterated in the confines of the chief investigators' private office, that Taylor had recently been considered as interfering in certain love affairs of the motion picture world here, strengthened the investigators' belief that a young man, maddened by jealousy, plotted his death.

* * * * *

February 11, 1922

Mabel Normand

LOS ANGELES RECORD

"My Own Story" by Mabel Normand

Film Star Writes Story of Last Visit with Slain Movie Director

This is my own story of just what happened on the night of my last visit to William D. Taylor, the evening of February 1.

In response to a telephone call left by Mr. Taylor at my home during the afternoon of the day he was killed I stopped at his house between 7 and 7:15

in the evening.

The purpose of my call was to pick up a book which Mr. Taylor had purchased for me that afternoon, knowing particularly that I wanted it. He had already sent one book to my home but had requested me to stop for this one, which I assumed he had purchased later.

Upon my arrival I was let in by Henry Peavey, Taylor's valet, who informed me Mr. Taylor was conversing with someone over the phone. In a few moments after my arrival Mr. Taylor said good-bye to the party with whom he was conversing and left the telephone.

He greeted me. He had just finished dinner and his man had cleared away the table but he asked me if I would not let him have something prepared for me or go out to dinner with him later. I declined, explaining that I was tired and that I had an early studio call to make the next morning.

I said that I intended to go home early, have dinner and go to bed. For 25 minutes Mr. Taylor and I sat discussing various books and photoplays.

About 20 minutes to eight, I prepared to start for home. Mr. Taylor walked with me to where my car was parked at the curbing.

There was a copy of the "Police Gazette" in the car which he noticed. He chided me for having it in my possession, remarking that Freud, Haeckel and Nietzsche were hardly compatible with such literature.

After an exchange of repartee for a few minutes, I finally bade him good night and directed by chauffeur to drive me home.

Before I left, Mr. Taylor promised to phone me at my home within one hour. He never did.

As William (my chauffeur) pulled away from the curb I looked back and saw Mr. Taylor standing there, gazing after me. I waved my hand.

That was the last time I ever saw Mr. Taylor alive.

Within a few minutes I was at my home. I retired, having dinner served to me in bed about 8:15.

The first knowledge I had of Mr. Taylor's death was when Edna Purviance phoned me the following morning about 7:30. She told me that Mr. Taylor's valet had been seen rushing from Mr. Taylor's home, screaming that his master

was dead.

I have no idea who killed Mr. Taylor or what was the reason for his death.

I would only be too proud to announce the fact had I been engaged to Mr. Taylor, but such a statement would not be true.

I held Mr. Taylor in highest esteem, regarding him as a very learned, cultured gentleman, with whom any woman might be proud to associate.

Mr. Taylor and I had much in common and during the long period of our friendship I had made a study of the French language and philosophy in which I had been interested for some time. I am also interested in these things now.

So far as revealing the contents of any letters written by Mr. Taylor to me or by me to Mr. Taylor is concerned I have no reason to fear any consequences which might result from such disclosures except the natural embarrassment of having personal correspondence revealed to the public gaze.

* * * * *

February 11, 1922

Eleanor M. Barnes

LOS ANGELES RECORD

"No Woman in Taylor Case"

"Find Sands!"

This laconic suggestion of Mrs. J. M. Berger, income tax specialist, is the solution of the William Desmond Taylor murder mystery.

"No doubt of it in my mind," said Mrs. Berger, a young business woman, with a wealth of bronze hair, and brown eyes. "Edward F. Sands is the man. I am sure."

Mrs. Berger opened her mail as she talked about the motion picture director who had called at her office in the H. W. Hellman building just a few hours before he was slain in his bachelor apartments.

"He was here in the afternoon to attend some business," she explained. "I help not only motion picture folks but many prominent business men on their income tax returns."

"Had he expressed a fear of Sands?" Mrs. Berger was asked.

"Yes, he had talked about his former valet-secretary's forging his name, and about the 'Alias Jimmy Valentine' note that he had received.

"I did not know Mr. Taylor intimately--only in a business way, but I knew some of the most intimate details of his business which I have told to the district attorney in an effort to clear up the mystery.

"I swooned at the inquest. I am sorry I gazed at his body which was the color of his khaki suit.

"I do not think there is a woman in the case.

"Why--" her white hand pointed to a large picture of Mary Miles Minter that was hanging on the wall of her room.

"Of course little Mary loved Mr. Taylor--who didn't? We all loved him. He was one of God's gentlemen, and he was far above the average in politeness and intelligence, from what I saw of him.

"I had spent many, many hours with Mr. Taylor, but I had never heard of an enemy, except Sands. If the police find him surely, if he cannot explain his whereabouts on that night, he should be questioned carefully.

"Now, little Miss Mabel Normand is a fine girl. Of course my dealings with her have been purely business, but I think from what I have seen that Miss Normand was very worth while. Of course, Mary Miles Minter is only a child.

"Her letters, published, are purely those of a very young girl, and as Mr. Taylor said, 'a child.'

"I had asked him how she was on that day he called here and he said 'she has a touch of tonsillitis and temperament,' and that was all there was to it.

"I cannot believe a woman had anything to do with it. As to his changing his name--well, Billy Taylor may have had a reason, I do not know. If he had had an unfortunate experience in his life, perhaps he wanted to

forget it.

"I only know that he was a perfect gentleman, and that I hope the police never rest until they apprehend the assassin who robbed the world of such a fine man."

* * * * *

February 11, 1922

LOS ANGELES RECORD

Sands' Dog Points Way to Arrest

A high-bred Airedale dog bounded into the Taylor mystery Saturday and started investigation along a new line which may result in locating the murderer.

The dog was either given away or sold by Edward F. Sands shortly before he left the employ of Taylor.

Men intimately acquainted with Sands' peculiarities say that he was very fond of this animal and that he would never have parted with it except to some one in whom he had implicit confidence.

If the present owner can be found considerable light will be thrown on Sands' recent activities, it is believed.

Interesting theories regarding Sands were advanced Saturday by neighbors who had observed his conduct while he was in the motion picture director's employ. One of these neighbors, a woman of high intelligence, announced she had reached the conclusion that Sands is not the guilty person.

"He appeared to me," she said, "to be a big healthy animal, lazy, selfish and mindful first of his personal comfort. I gain this impression not only from what I have heard, but from what I have observed of the man as he passed our home daily. Men of the type Sands apparently was do not murder --murder would mean mental discomfort and these men think first of their own well being."

This woman was greatly impressed by the theory that blackmailers had

been at work. She was of the opinion that letters that had fallen into the hands of professional blackmailers may be an explanation of the mystery...

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February 11, 1922

SAN FRANCISCO CALL

Los Angeles, Feb. 11--...District Attorney Woolwine, who has a national reputation for fearlessness in conducting the affairs of his office, is working from seventeen to eighteen hours a day on the case, despite the fact that he has not been a well man for several months.

Sometime ago he was stricken with ptomaine poisoning and later he suffered an attack of grippe. He had not entirely recovered from this when the trial of Arthur C. Burch, accused of the murder of J. Belton Kennedy, reached its height. He received another setback and had to let assistants handle the case a few days. The prosecutor was so weak he could hardly stand when he made his final pleas to the jury in the Burch case.

He is conducting the Taylor murder inquiry in a well formulated manner and, although sessions are held in secret, it is known that they are much like court sessions.

It is the belief of newspaper reporters that a prominent motion picture producer may be one of the next persons summoned to appear for questioning regarding his knowledge of Taylor and his associates. Other widely known film stars also are scheduled to appeared before the investigators....

* * * * *

February 11, 1922

LOS ANGELES EXPRESS

...Meanwhile the police were searching for L. D. Dailey, alleged roommate of Walter Thiele at 333 East Fourth street, to question him concerning the slaying. Dailey, the police assert, is the owner of a blood-

stained cap found in Thiele's room. The alleged connection of the two men with the case is being closely guarded by the police.

Thiele was arrested early this morning by detectives from central police station. He is accused of committing a burglary on the night the murder occurred and is being held in the city jail on that charge.

Back of it all, however, the police intimate, is the theory that the man has information in his possession which would prove of value to the probe of the mystery. He is scheduled to appear first before Capt. David L. Adams of the police detective bureau, before deputies in the sheriff's office and finally before District Attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine.

Questioned at police headquarters early today, Thiele said that he had come to Los Angeles about three months ago from Placerville, Cal. He was planning to return to his home when he was arrested.

Relative to the blood-stained cap in his possession he said that the article belonged to Dailey, a man that he described as a "hasher out of work." He became acquainted with the man about three weeks ago, he stated, and had offered him lodging in his own room...

* * * * *

February 11, 1922
LOS ANGELES HERALD

...Rumors that Miss Normand went to the Taylor home to force Taylor to return her letters were branded as "vicious falsehoods" today by Charles Eyton, general manager of the Famous Players-Lasky corporation.

"These stories will be retracted or I'll know the reason why," Eyton said.

"Miss Normand went to Taylor's home that night to get a book. She didn't try to get her letters until after the murder had been committed. I was in his home after the inquest with the public administrator when she called and asked for them.

"There is a tendency on the part of certain interests to dish dirt about

a man who cannot now defend himself against scandalous insinuations. They shall retract this particular statement or I'll know the reason why."

* * * * *

February 11, 1922
LONG BEACH TELEGRAM

A woman, middle aged and of the quiet, intellectual type, known to have been deeply in love with William Desmond Taylor, slain film director, while actresses showered him with affectionate attentions, was expected to be called to the district attorney's office to be questioned today in an entirely new, and important phase of the investigation of the mysterious murder.

Taylor's tragic death, it was stated, caused the woman to go into seclusion and deep mourning. The woman's name was withheld, but it was learned that she was known in filmdom as a scenario writer.

The unrequited love of the woman for Taylor, it was learned, extended over a period of years. No suspicion is directed against her, but investigators believe she may be able to throw light on Taylor's life which may reveal a tangible clew.

A theory that Taylor may have been slain by blackmailers was revived today when it was reported that the district attorney's office had been given new information suggesting that he was killed because he tried to defend a motion picture actress from whom blackmailers had attempted to extort money.

It was reported that the actress had appealed to Taylor for protection from a gang of blackmailers whose headquarters are believed to have been in New York, but whose operations were nation wide in scope. It was regarded as a possibility that the director may have defied the blackmailers--a move that may have resulted in his death.

* * * * *

February 12, 1922

Edward Doherty

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Los Angeles, Feb. 11--...The report that the movie interests are not only trying to block the investigation but are also trying to complicate the mystery by injecting new mysteries, new theories, new angles into it, persists in spite of all denials...

* * * * *

February 12, 1922

NEW YORK TRIBUNE

Los Angeles, Feb. 11--Four detectives are guarding a house in West Fourth Street, this city, tonight, awaiting the coming of a man who will be arrested and charged with the murder of William Desmond Taylor. The man sought is the man from whom Walter Thiele, arrested as a suspect in the Taylor case last night and released, obtained a bloodstained cap--a cap such as was worn by the murderer of Taylor

The police declare the man for whom they are waiting is a drug addict. They have asked that his name be withheld until the arrest. They have searched his home, and declare they have evidence to connect him with the slaying.

It was stated that the detective department also believes that one of the most important persons in the film world, whose name has not even been whispered in connection with the murder, and one who had a motive unsuspected until today, is involved in the murder.

Joe Nolan and Al Manning, of the Sheriff's office, also are working on a new angle in the case, it is said, and another woman star is involved... Henry Peavey, Taylor's servant, was questioned by Woolwine late this afternoon. Woolwine had been told that Peavey was seen talking to a rough looking man back of the Taylor house in Alvarado street a few nights before the murder. Peavey was brought in by two detectives. He remained closeted

with the inquisitors for some time and came out smiling, saying he had told every thing he knew.

Asked about the "rough looking man," he said he didn't know anything about him--he wouldn't associate with any rough characters. This is the second time Peavey has been taken to the district attorney's office...

Sands, Taylor's secretary, is still being hunted. He is reported here, there, everywhere. He is said to have been Taylor's brother. He is said to have been this shadowy personality and that. But the murder charge prepared by the District Attorney's office, some time ago, has not yet been lodged against him, and this is thought significant.

A plausible new theory which came to Woolwine's attention overnight was that Taylor was killed because a woman haunted by blackmailers had confided in him and they feared him. This actress, twice arrested, is said to have paid tolls on folly for years, and to have gone to Taylor, hoping he could protect her. The blackmailers are said to have been part of a band of opium runners, supplying the woman with drugs and taking her money under threats of exposing her.

The actress had been a drug addict for years, was in the depths, was out of the picture game for a time. And she made a desperate "comeback." She went to an eastern sanitarium and remained there until the luster came back to her eyes, the tint to her cheeks, the ambition into her system. She returned to the studios and made a smashing success in her first picture.

But the blackmailers and the venders of narcotics kept after her, gave her no peace. Taylor was her friend. She had heard he was an adventurer, a soldier, a miner on the Yukon, a man not afraid to use guns, and one who knew how to use them. So, it is thought, she told him her troubles and he agreed to protect her.

In this connection, it may be recalled that Taylor, speaking of blackmailers, once said, "The only way to get rid of them is to kill them."

Since Taylor's death, it is said, the victim of the gang, nervous, lonesome, desperate, has again taken to the drug.

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February 12, 1922

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

Los Angeles, Feb. 11--Miss Gene Ross, silhouette artist, who lives in the Ambassador hotel, gave this afternoon a word silhouette of William D. Taylor. She had regarded him she said, as a man of drab personality, a camouflage man who fitted into the background, whose clothes were somber, dull, colorless, whose conversation was quiet, vague and submerged.

But on the Saturday night before his death, she says, she noted a change in the man. He had come to her studio in the Ambassador hotel with Miss Claire Windsor.

And while Miss Windsor was looking over the studies in black an white, Taylor paced the floor, nervous, fear in his manner, his walk, the tension of his hands. She knew he was afraid of something, she said. He paid no attention to either herself or his companion, yet he seemed to wince and stare when persons passed by the door.

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February 12, 1922

Edward Doherty

NEW YORK NEWS

Los Angeles, Feb. 11--A dozen Wall Street explosions, with the assassination of a President thrown in, could scarcely shock the good, average, decent, movie-going, hero-worshipping people of America as have the all but unbelievable revelations of this last week.

In the cities with their first-run publics, just as at the crossroads where only one night a week is movie night, the gods and goddesses of the silent drama have been accepted for years at the face value of the flawless characters they invariably are cast to portray.

Disclosures attending the Arbuckle investigation and trials were taken

mostly with a shrug. Save for the surviving principal--and he a professional buffoon, a funny man from whom one would no more expect nobility in private life than in the pictures--those involved were comparative unknowns.

But in the quagmire bared by detectives delving into the mysterious murder of William Desmond Taylor, one of the greatest of the great among directors, are floundering stars held in international esteem--the strong, the brave, the surpassing fair, the innocent, the guileless, the very man whom fans would have sworn by, the very girls for whose reputations tens of thousands of ardent though distant admirers would have fought at the drop of a hat.

Beyond quibble or question the "dirt" is out.

After having built up motion pictures to the position of the nation's fifth industry, after having uplifted scores of possessors of pretty faces into the financial clouds, the country has awakened with a shock to the realization that virtue is only screen deep.

To all who read the newspapers has been vouchsafed a glimpse behind the screen. Fans of yesterday stand figuratively at the peephole, shuddering yet spellbound...

William Desmond Taylor himself was the guiding spirit of one of the weird Hollywood cults. That was the discovery which brought the "dirt" deluge.

In the movies Taylor, supremely well-educated, a cosmopolite, made his mark as an artist. The pictures he directed brought him fame and a salary of \$38,000 a year. On that income nothing was unattainable. It would appear he might have wed filmland's premier comedienne or the sweet-faced little girl with the blonde ringlets who numbers her undeclared lovers by the million.

But it seems that Taylor preferred the bachelorhood he had regained by flight. Edward Sands, his first valet--now sought in connection with the murder--was more his intimate than his servant. Sands resented his employer's off-hand attentions to women.

Harry [sic] Peavey, the big Negro who succeeded to Sands's situation, proved another of the same sort. He was a male soprano. He dearly loved to

do fancy work.

The police learned that Taylor had frequented strange and vicious places where drug addicts gathered, chiefly recruited from the blase element of Hollywood, actors and actresses who had wearied of their fabulous salaries-- who affected to be wearied even by adulation...

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February 12, 1922

LOS ANGELES EXAMINER

While members of the local police and detective departments were running down every available clew in the probe into the mystery murder of William D. Taylor, noted film director, two representatives of a nationally known detective agency recently assigned to the case were engaged in a thorough quiz of every person living in the court in which the director formerly lived.

And Mrs. M. S. Stone, mother-in-law of A. W. Wachter, of 412-A South Alvarado street, gave one of the most interesting recitals that has yet come to the attention of officers. She said:

"I was walking slowly up Alvarado street, going to the home of Mr. Wachter for dinner."

Mrs. Stone lives at the Duke Apartments on South Carondelet street, and frequently goes to the Wachter home for dinner, generally walking north on Alvarado street from Westlake Park to the latter home.

"As I crossed from the west to the east side of Alvarado street, at Sixth, I saw a man standing on the corner, apparently waiting for a car. But he didn't board the car that came along, and as I was rather nervous about walking up the street in the dusk, I waited momentarily on the corner."

The man stopped in front of the Hotel Alvarado, according to Mrs. Stone, and transferred something from his left hip pocket to the right hand pocket of his coat.

"Then he started rather aimlessly up the hill, on Alvarado street,"

Mrs. Stone continued.

"I walked on behind him, and when he reached Maryland street he turned north out of Alvarado."

Maryland street is the one that runs directly behind the apartments occupied by Taylor.

Mrs. Stone said that when she noticed the man at first she said to herself that he would have been well dressed except for the fact that his suit did not appear to fit well at the collar--that it bulged uncertainly in the rear, and that his collar was not visible.

"At that time," Mrs. Stone said, speaking of the man's turning into Maryland street, "I thought it might have been Taylor's chef."

She knew Edward F. Sands, Taylor's former valet and chauffeur, as his chef, having seen him in the court at various times wearing the white cap common to cooks. But this man was taller.

She described the man she had seen as being 5 feet 9 inches in height, wearing a dark suit, tan oxfords and dark socks. Also, she said, his hair was dark, that his neck and earlobes were thick and his skin ruddy. She said he wore a cap, although she could not distinguish whether it was plaid or checked. But she did not get a good look at his face when she first encountered him.

Later in the evening, after Mr. and Mrs. Wachter had left the house, she took little Lynette Wachter, her granddaughter to bed. Just as they were mounting the stairs, about 8 o'clock, she thought she heard a pistol shot, but fearing to frighten her charge, she did not mention it. But after arriving upstairs, she went to the window and looked out.

"I had a strange feeling," Mrs. Stone said, "and thought at the time that I was glad my daughter lived on the south side of the court, because of the shrubbery on the north side."

Mrs. Stone said that Mr. and Mrs. Wachter had returned home about 11:30 o'clock in the evening.

N. J. Harrington, of 408-A South Alvarado, threw further light on the case, and also added to its mystery.

Last August, he said, he was returning home after dark one night. After putting his car in the garage, he passed the house occupied by Taylor and saw a man peering into one of the windows which was not fully curtained.

"He was about 5 feet 9 inches in height," Mr. Harrington said, "about 30 years of age, and weighed about 160 pounds. He had regular features and was dressed in a gray suit and cap. No, it was not Sands. I had seen him too often in the court to mistake him."

And on the Monday preceding the murder--

When Harrington again walked by the Taylor home, he saw two men at Taylor's front door. They apparently had rung the bell and when no one answered, they were talking between themselves on the veranda. One was much smaller than the other, and one wore a cap, the other a hat.

Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Lawrence of 400-A South Alvarado also told an interesting story.

The family was downstairs on the evening of the murder until about 8:30 o'clock, when Mrs. Lawrence went to the bedroom upstairs.

"My husband said he heard a short conversation--portions of it--a woman's laugh, a man say good-by, and then a car driving away," Mrs. Lawrence said. Their apartment is the nearest in the court to Alvarado street.

"That is all we know."

But about a week before Taylor's murder, Mrs. Lawrence said she went home alone one night, before 7 o'clock, and saw two men loitering behind their home.

And several days previous to Taylor's death, a man came to the Lawrence home inquiring for Taylor.

"He looked enough like Taylor to have been his twin," Mr. Lawrence said.

Miss Edna Purviance, film actress, who lives at 402-A South Alvarado, in the house next to the one occupied by Taylor, said:

"I was not at home the night of the murder, so of course I did not hear or see anything unusual."

She explained that she and her mother had been away from home until about 11:45 o'clock.

"Reports in the newspapers that I tried the door and rang the bell at Mr. Taylor's home, when I noticed lights burning there, are false," Miss Purviance said.

"There is nothing unusual to me in the sight of lights burning in a private home at midnight, and I certainly did not try to enter the house that night."

E. C. Jessurun of 406-A South Alvarado, and owner of the court, admitted that he had heard the shot which it is believed ended Taylor's life.

"I had been ill for about three weeks," he said. "My wife and I were talking and reading when I heard the report.

"I sat up, hearing the noise, but figured it was only an automobile back-fire, so lay down again."

Vern Dumas of 408-A South Alvarado said that he noticed one of the window curtains in Taylor's home slightly awry when he came home the night of the murder. He walks home directly by the Taylor house, through an areaway, after putting his car in the garage.

"But I didn't notice particularly," he said: "It looked as if a table had been pushed against it."

Both Dumas and H. H. Lewin commented on the preciseness with which Taylor's body was arranged on the floor.

"It looked as if he had been laid out in a coffin for burial," both said.

Then came an interview with A. W. Wachter of 412-A South Alvarado.

He said that on Thursday night, more than a week after Taylor's murder, a Marmon coupe had driven up in front of the entrance to the court.

Wachter is in the automobile business, and says he can tell the make of a car by the hum of its engine.

"The engine remained running," Wachter said, "but the lights were turned out. A man ran to the door of Taylor's home and rang the bell, but when no one responded, he ran back to the car, jumped in, the lights were flashed on, and the car sped away."

Wachter said that the night before the murder he had seen Mabel Normand

and Taylor get in a coupe and drive away.

On the night of the murder, he said, he was away from home from before 8 o'clock until about 11:15 or 11:30, but that about 4 a.m. on February 2 he had risen and looked out the window, noticing the lights burning in Taylor's home.

C. A. Fitzhenry, a friend of Wachter, who visited him frequently, told Wachter that on several occasions, upon leaving the court, he had seen a man in a black overcoat and black Fedora hat standing at the corner of Maryland and Alvarado streets.

Mr. and Mrs. S. G. Buckner of 412-B South Alvarado street, also told an interesting story.

They were at a dancing party on the fateful Wednesday night, they said, and did not return home until about 4:30 o'clock Thursday morning.

"We noticed the lights then," both said, "burning in Taylor's home."

They thought nothing of it, however, but when Mr. Buckner arose at 6 o'clock to investigate trouble with their hot-water heater the lights were still burning.

"I thought it strange at the time," he said.

Later they were awakened by the screams of Henry Peavey, Taylor's negro servant.

"He was running about the lawn and walks, screaming that Mr. Taylor was murdered," Mrs. Buckner said.

Mr. Buckner hurried over to the house, being one of the first to arrive there. He also was the man who notified the police of Taylor's death.

"I noticed and commented on the fact that the body was laid out precisely," Mr. Buckner said.

"The cuffs and collar were straight and his clothing not disarranged at all. I thought it strange at the time that a man murdered should fall in such a position."

Mr. Buckner noticed that Taylor's wrist watch, just visible below the cuff at his left wrist, showed the hour as being just 8 o'clock when he saw it. He said he thought the watch was still running.

And Douglas MacLean, of 406-B South Alvarado, told one of the most interesting stories of all.

Mrs. MacLean was the one who saw the mystery man leaving the Taylor house just after the shot was fired.

Her description of the man has been given time and again, and both say that they have been bothered greatly by detectives and newspaper men, repeating over and over the same story.

"Mrs. MacLean and I had just finished dinner," Mr. MacLean said.

"The night being rather chilly, I had gone upstairs to the bathroom, to get a small electric stove we have there, and bring it downstairs.

"I heard a report like a shot, but thought it merely an automobile backfiring.

"Mrs. MacLean also heard it. She went to the door and glanced around. She saw the man on Taylor's porch. He was standing with the screen door in his hand, apparently looking about. He then turned back to the door as if speaking farewell, and after doing so left the porch, walking down the walk toward Alvarado street. No, he didn't run, nor did he seem hurried."

Mrs. MacLean said she did not see the man's face. In fact, it's rather hard to distinguish anyone at that distance in the court, because of the peculiar lighting system.

And Mr. MacLean, to demonstrate this fact to the detectives, went from his house to the porch of the Taylor home and posed in the same manner as the man whom his wife had seen.

"Mrs. MacLean thought nothing of the incident," he concluded, "and we started playing dominoes together, doing so for some time before retiring."

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February 12, 1922

LOS ANGELES TIMES

A man suspected by at least six police investigators of having first-hand knowledge of the slaying of William Desmond Taylor, internationally

known film director, has been identified by the detectives working on the case and by some of the witnesses questioned by Dist.-Atty. Woolwine in the past few days, and his arrest is believed to be a matter of hours.

This was indicated by Captain of Detectives Adams when he admitted that several places where the suspect is expected to appear were guarded by his officers yesterday. The man's name is known to The Times, but is withheld at the request of the authorities.

A belief that the suspect may be the man who killed Taylor was strengthened yesterday following an all-night investigation of facts uncovered Friday.

The man, the officers now believe, is the owner of the blood-stained cap found by the police and has been in hiding since the night of the murder. His actions have been traced sufficiently to convince a number of the investigators that he was either implicated in the slaying of Taylor or is withholding some important information. His home in an apartment-house on West Fourth Street was searched by the officers armed with a search warrant early yesterday morning.

Later the search for the man shifted to a downtown location and out of town.

"The man is in town, we are certain of this," one of the detectives on the case said early yesterday morning. "We know all about his actions, and as soon as we can lay our hands on him we will place him under arrest on the charge of murdering William D. Taylor."

That the officers are on the right track was indicated by the fact that the cap found by the police was taken to the District Attorney's office and there exhibited to Miss Mabel Normand and William Davis, her chauffeur, shortly before midnight Friday. Immediately after the reported identification of the cap the officers left the District Attorney's office with orders to arrest the suspects.

The arrest of Walter Thiele by Detectives Lloyd and Roberts on the charge of suspicion of burglary had only a remote connection with the investigation concerning the suspect. The officers admit that Thiele may be

able to give them some information about the man, but stated emphatically that Thiele had no knowledge of the crime or anything directly connected with it.

Henry Peavey, colored valet for Mr. Taylor, was summarily called to Dist.-Atty. Woolwine's office late yesterday following the discovery of new and important information regarding the murder. Peavey had previously been questioned at considerable length in Mr. Woolwine's office by Chief Deputy Doran.

The valet arrived at Mr. Woolwine's office shortly after 8 p.m. yesterday and was closeted for a considerable time with the District Attorney, Mr. Doran and officers of the police department and of the Sheriff's force.

The instructions for the officers to bring Peavey to the office where the investigation into the murder mystery has been centralized came shortly after a new witness had been in long conference with the officials.

The witness, whose name was said by Undersheriff Biscailuz and Deputy Sheriff Nolan to be Henry Britt, but which was signed by the young man as Edward F. Arto, was taken to Mr. Woolwine's office from Sheriff Traeger's headquarters. He refused to give his name to newspaper men.

Mr. Arto, as he signed himself, said he overheard a conversation either the night of the murder or the night before between Peavey and another man regarding Mr. Taylor's affairs. The nature of the conversation aside from that Mr. Arto declined to divulge, but he believed the information of value to the investigators.

Mr. Arto was going to the home of some relatives near the Taylor apartments on South Alvarado street about 7:10 p.m. when he heard the two men talking. He gave a rather vague description of the strange man but said he was an American apparently, wore a cap and aroused Mr. Arto's sus[....(gap)] stated. Peavey strenuously denied that he held any such conversation.

The Taylor home faces south into an apartment court and the rear of the building is flush with the sidewalk on Maryland street. It was at this point that the conversation took place, the witness stated...

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February 12, 1922

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Santa Barbara, Feb. 11--"The Whitney family have the greatest respect for Miss Mary Miles Minter, we are good friends, but we know of nothing that would throw light on the killing of William Desmond Taylor, who was Miss Minter's director in Santa Barbara," said H. R. Whitney, whose wife, Charlotte Whitney, was Miss Minter's secretary.

Efforts to see Mrs. Whitney failed, because she was with friends, and the family said would not be back tonight, that they did not know where she had gone.

The talk developed that a member of the Los Angeles Sheriff's office was here two days ago and had a long talk with Charlotte Whitney in connection with the associations between Mr. Taylor and Miss Minter, but "he could get nothing of importance, because Mrs. Whitney knew nothing," the husband said.

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February 12, 1922

BOSTON ADVERTISER

Los Angeles, Feb. 11--The startling theory was advanced by some of the investigating officials tonight that the actual assassin of William D. Taylor --\$85,000 a year movie director--was employed by a powerful man in the motion picture industry.

It is their theory that the assassin may have been checking up on the film directors' movements for several nights before his opportunity came to strike the death blow.

These officials go so far as to speculate that the man who may have employed the assassin was so well known that he could not afford to be seen near the house when the crime was committed.

If, in fact, a certain man powerful in the motion picture industry is found to have been involved, then it will occasion no surprise amongst the police who are checking up on him that he should have employed an assassin.

Against this it is contended that no man, particularly one in the position of the magnate referred to, would risk placing himself within the power of the other.

However, it is pointed out that men have employed assassins before this and that it proved to be very much against the interests of either class to expose the other.

It is because of the probability that inquiries are being made of private detective agencies of the city, especially the more obscure and least reputable, to find if their operatives were ever employed to watch Taylor and, if so, by whom.

It will be remembered that on the morning following the murder the tracks of a man were found in the alley, and nearby were several cigarette ends. It was concluded then, and the supposition has never been disproved or discounted by any evidence secured since that time, that the man who stood there long enough to smoke six cigarettes was watching Taylor's house.

Dwellers in the vicinity saw another man two nights before the murder. His attention was centered on the Taylor home.

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February 12, 1922

Oscar Fernbach

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER

Los Angeles, Feb. 11--Has Mabel Normand, film actress, who last night was grilled for nearly four hours by District Attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine in his quest for light on the murder of William Desmond Taylor, told all that could in any way have a bearing on the mystery?

This was the question uppermost in the mind of Woolwine today as he resumed his investigation of the killing of the film director.

The district attorney is not yet prepared to answer it in the affirmative.

It developed today that during the quizzing of Mabel Normand, Woolwine was in great measure actuated by the theory that Taylor may have been slain by some blackmailer from whom he was trying to shield not himself, but the actress.

A supposition which bears no mean weight is that Miss Normand, during her last sojourn in New York, was made the objective victim of a blackmailing gang--perhaps that of "Dapper Dan" Collins, who with another man and two women is believed to have been in Los Angeles just a few days before the murder.

Miss Normand, the theory goes, may have confided her troubles to Taylor. If she had, the firm director might have been engaged in an effort to rid her of her persecutors and might have defied them.

Nothing was stated by Mabel Normand last night, in answer to Woolwine's questions, to support this theory. But before much time has elapsed Woolwine will again interrogate the film star.

Today she was in a highly nervous state, the result of the long inquisition of the night before. But to all inquiries she repeated steadfastly: "I have told absolutely everything I know."

Outside of his proposed further investigation along this particular line, the district attorney, it was learned today, will summon to his office, Mrs. Julia Crawford Ivers, the well known scenario writer. Mrs. Ivers was a warm friend of Taylor's and was admittedly an ardent admirer of his great intellectuality. She had worked in conjunction with him at the Morosco studios, at the time when Taylor was directing Constance Talmadge. Since Taylor's death, Mrs. Ivers has been in practical seclusion, denying herself to all interviewers.

Woolwine does not believe that the scenario writer has any knowledge of the immediate circumstances that resulted in the murder of Taylor but is said to feel that Mrs. Ivers may have received the confidence of the director on matters relating to his past, and that some detail may furnish a base upon

which to build more than merely a plausible theory of the causes that led ultimately to the killing in the Alvarado Street bungalow...

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February 12, 1922

Pauline Payne

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

Los Angeles, Feb. 11--That the shadow of an assassin's murderous weapon may have fallen across the drab life path of William D. Taylor as early as the Saturday night prior to his slaying was revealed tonight by Gene Ross, the beautiful young silhouette artist whose studio in the Ambassador hotel was visited by the director on that evening.

Declaring that he came to her studio, accompanied by Claire Windsor, motion picture girl, Miss Ross, in a dramatic and graphic manner, described today for the first time the strange actions of the victim in the sensational mystery.

"I had always considered Mr. Taylor the most colorless individual I had ever known until last Saturday evening--a man o' the mists as far as his personality was concerned--but he seemed on that farewell meeting like a man gripped by a terrible and dread fear.

"Biting his lips, he paced the floor, back and forth--back and forth--with an endless monotony--while Miss Windsor examined some of my studies in black and white.

"Nervous, absent minded, haggard, and acting in a most peculiar manner, he seemed to shrink from even the shadows of passersby, until my attention was attracted to his unusual actions.

"Always dressed in gray in the night time, and in khaki tones usually about the motion picture 'lots,' Mr. Taylor had often impressed me as being a man who was an adept at submerging himself into any background.

"Even his way of walking was quiet and unobtrusive. Quiet like a camouflaged man, or so, he seemed to me, so remarkable did he succeed in

obliterating his own individuality both physically and mentally.

"Yet on that Saturday night--the last time I ever saw him alive--Mr. Taylor stood out most vividly because of the overhanging sense of horror or secret fear, which seemed to have mastered him.

"I used to know Mr. Taylor quite well, while I was sketching art titles for the Famous Players. We frequently met on the studio lots. And I have often marveled at the drabness of the man.

"Being an artist, I suppose the lack of color in both his attire and personality struck me more forcibly than his other associates. He should have dressed in dark blues or blacks, or some decided color, but instead of that he was continuously in what I called to myself his camouflage tones--gray and khaki. Not even a bit of jewelry or a striking cravat to relieve the dullness of his costuming."

According to the analysis of the murdered director, made today by the young artist, Mr. Taylor's appeal to women rested fundamentally upon that very ability to submerge his own personality and exaggerate the individuality of those with whom he came in contact.

"Mr. Taylor was never in the least forward with women," said Miss Ross today. "In fact, he was rather diffident. But I believe that the secret of his attraction to women was that he was ever ready to talk of them, of their interests, of their achievements, their hopes and ambitions.

"Then, too, Mr. Taylor was a man of profound culture and could discuss art, music, the drama, literature or politics with charming facility.

"It is a noteworthy fact, however, that he never referred to his own past life, his own interests, hopes or fears in his conversations with others.

"A man of great poise, that Saturday night, first time I beheld him with the veil stripped from his face perhaps. And I beheld then a man evidently under a ghastly strain of some sort--a man with taut nerves. Even his voice was changed. Usually he spoke in a calm, colorless, beautifully modulated voice, but that night his remarks came in jerks."

Was it on this night that the "man o' the mists" beheld the shadow of

his assassin's murderous weapon, raised for the fatal blow?`

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February 12, 1922

A. Chester Keel

SHREVEPORT TIMES

Los Angeles, Feb. 11--...The man whose testimony had led to recalling Peavey, Taylor's negro cook-valet, to Woolwine's office has been dubbed the "secret man." The district attorney's office gave out his name as Frank Britt. Investigation reveals that his true name is George F. Arto. Why the district attorney wishes to conceal his true name has not been learned.

Arto told Universal Service that he was calling on a neighbor of Taylor's sometime between 7:30 and 8:15. He passed in the rear of the bungalow court to reach the house as has been his custom. Just short of Taylor's home he said he saw Peavey talking to a short, heavyset man.

Peavey was questioned for nearly an hour. After he had been dismissed Woolwine said that he had not divulged anything new.

Peavey denied Arto's statement. He said that he did not talk to any person let alone a man such as Arto described.

The district attorney apparently despaired of a solution of the case today. Immediately after dismissing Peavey, he called in all the detectives working on the case. It was the second conference of the day and lasted until after 5 o'clock. At the conclusion, Woolwine was asked whether he planned to question witnesses tonight. He said that he did not think so.

Woolwine indicated, however, that he would resume the investigation tomorrow.

Public Administrator Frank Bryson may bring suits, if necessary, against a number of leading persons in the film world to recover thousands of dollars loaned to actresses and others by Taylor. In his checkbook were found many stubs on which was written "loan." The amounts on these stubs total thousands of dollars and indicate that Taylor was a man of great liberality.

A revelation of the day was the amount of "crank" letters written to persons interested in the case. Mabel Normand has received on an average of 100 a day. Most of them were from movie "fans" who expressed great sympathy for her. One was from the vice president of a bank in Texas, which she prizes very highly.

Captain of Detectives David L. Adams has received the most curious assortment. They range from those giving advice to others containing "confessions." One man wrote from Wisconsin "confessing" that he had killed Taylor. He even described the murder.

Investigations by county detectives virtually eliminate the son of a wealthy eastern family. He established an alibi...

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February 12, 1922
FRESNO REPUBLICAN

Roused from early morning slumbers and dreams of traps filled with fur animals, Harry Sanborn, 37, trapper, prospector, adventurer, hermit, early yesterday morning satisfactorily proved to Sheriff W. F. Jones, Deputy Collins, and three representatives of The Republican that he was not Edward F. Sands, former valet of William Desmond Taylor, murdered Los Angeles motion picture director.

Reports received in Fresno late Friday night stated a man whose description tallied with that of the sought Sands was living in a hovel in the San Joaquin river bottom, two miles from Lane's bridge and 17 miles from Fresno...

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February 12, 1922
LONG BEACH PRESS

That there was no woman connected with the mysterious murder of William

Desmond Taylor, veteran film director, is the belief of Mrs. J. M. Berger, income tax specialist who assisted the slain man to make out his tax report a few hours before he met his death.

Mrs. Berger's clientele includes many prominent movie people mentioned in connection with the Taylor case. She knew Taylor, Mary Miles Minter and Mabel Normand well.

She volunteered information on the business of life of the slain director to District Attorney Woolwine today.

"There's no doubt in my mind that Edward Sands, the fugitive ex-valet of Taylor, was the murderer. Taylor mentioned to me on the afternoon of his murder that he was forced to keep close watch on his personal checks since Sands had forged his name on several occasions."

Taylor is said to have mentioned the fact to other friends that Sands could imitate his handwriting, with almost flawless precision.

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February 12, 1922
SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

Los Angeles, Feb. 11--The private stock of liquor, declared to be of excellent brands and almost rare in the days of prohibition, that was found in the home of William Desmond Taylor, murdered film director, today furnished a problem for the government officials.

The liquor, under the strict "dry" law of the country, cannot be turned over to the heirs of the slain director and may have to be destroyed.

Public Administrator Frank Bryson brought the matter to the fore by applying to the local prohibition officials for a permit to remove the liquor stock from the Taylor residence to his office.

It was stated the permit likely would be granted, but that the liquor may have to be destroyed later unless an order is issued in federal court permitting its donation to some hospital for medical purposes.

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February 12, 1922

Thomas Lee Woolwine

NEW YORK AMERICAN

Los Angeles, Feb. 11.--In the William Desmond Taylor case, the police officers have been busy night and day working upon various theories, and the statements of a great number of persons that we thought might tend to throw some light upon this mysterious killing have been taken by the District Attorney.

We are, of course, but little beyond the very threshold of the investigation, but I must say that so far nothing has developed that gives us the slightest intimation as to who perpetrated the ghastly deed.

In all my experience I have seldom if ever come in contact with any case that is so devoid of substantial clues. There remains a great deal to be done, and we can only hope from day to day that this situation may change.

I have been informed that articles have been carried by the public press outside of the city of Los Angeles to the effect that the police authorities are not using their best endeavors to unravel this mystery, but from daily contact with officers working on the case I have never seen any intimation of such an attitude upon the part of any of them.

* * * * *

February 12, 1922

SYRACUSE POST-STANDARD

Saratoga, Feb. 11--A film starring Mary Miles Minter, actress whose name has appeared in the Hollywood murder mystery surrounding the death of William Desmond Taylor, has been canceled at one of the leading motion picture theaters here.

In addition, the manager announced, films showing either Mary Miles Minter or Mabel Normand will be banned until both actresses have been

satisfactorily cleared of all connection with the murder case.

The Minter picture was to have been the feature of next week's bill. It had been advertised and announced throughout the city. But this evening the manager of the theater decided he would not show it.

He said that the banning of the films did not mean that the theater interests considered Mary Miles Minter and Mabel Normand have more explanations to make in the murder scandal, but that because their names have figured prominently as being possibly in love with the murdered man it was thought best to keep them from the limelight until their connection with the case has been cleared up.

Back issues of Taylorology are available on the Web at any of the following:

<http://www.angelfire.com/az/Taylorology/>

<http://www.etext.org/Zines/ASCII/Taylorology/>

<http://www.silent-movies.com/Taylorology/>

Full text searches of back issues can be done at <http://www.etext.org/Zines/> or at <http://www.silent-movies.com/search.html>. For more information about Taylor, see

WILLIAM DESMOND TAYLOR: A DOSSIER (Scarecrow Press, 1991)

* T A Y L O R O L O G Y *
* A Continuing Exploration of the Life and Death of William Desmond Taylor *
* *
* Issue 82 -- October 1999 Editor: Bruce Long *
* TAYLOROLOGY may be freely distributed *

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What is TAYLOROLOGY?

TAYLOROLOGY is a newsletter focusing on the life and death of William Desmond Taylor, a top Paramount film director in early Hollywood who was shot to death on February 1, 1922. His unsolved murder was one of Hollywood's major scandals. This newsletter will deal with: (a) The facts of Taylor's life; (b) The facts and rumors of Taylor's murder; (c) The impact of the Taylor murder on Hollywood and the nation; (d) Taylor's associates and the Hollywood silent film industry in which Taylor worked. Primary emphasis will be given toward reprinting, referencing and analyzing source material, and sifting it for accuracy.

Mabel Normand in "Photoplay Weekly"

Reprinted below is a selection of items pertaining to Mabel Normand which were originally published in PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY during 1915-16. In some of the items, it appears that the Keystone press agent had a very active

imagination.

* * * * *

April 9, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mabel Normand, "Queen of the Movies," left last Saturday for San Francisco, where she will play the leading role in several Keystone pictures. With Miss Normand were Adam Kessel, Jr., President of the Keystone Film Company and the following members of the company which will support Miss Normand in the releases made in the Exposition City: Roscoe Arbuckle, Alice Davenport, Joe Bordeaux, Glen Cavender, Billy Gilbert, Eddie Kennedy and James Leslie. Mr. Kessel returned to Los Angeles on Monday.

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April 23, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Now that Mabel Normand, Keystone comedy star, has returned from San Francisco, Mack Sennett, managing director of all the Keystone companies, will resume work on the six reel feature that is nearing completion. Mr. Sennett himself is playing an important part in the film, together with Miss Normand, Ford Sterling, Owen Moore and other prominent actors. More elaborate scenery and costumes are being used in this multiple-reel than have ever been seen in any one comedy that has ever been made by any company and, notwithstanding the unprecedented success of the first six reel Keystone, "Tillie's Punctured Romance," there is every indication that the new release will be a superior product both artistically and financially.

* * * * *

April 30, 1915

Miss Mabel Normand, "Queen of the Movies," was greatly annoyed a few days ago by a "nut" who followed her to her home and later to the Keystone studio. He informed the gardener at her home that he was the "King of the Movies," but being no respecter of any royalty other than his employer, he chased the "King" into the street. The self-made "King" waited until Miss Normand left her home to go to the studio and followed her, attempting to enter when she did. He was promptly seized by the gateman and placed under arrest.

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May 14, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mabel's Mail

Mabel Normand, Keystone star comedienne, has a secretary to care for her correspondence which has long since overflowed all possibility of personal attention. Last month she received a total of seven hundred and twenty-six letters from all parts of the world. Many contain requests for photographs; others seek advice about sisters or daughters entering the moving picture profession and some are freak letters on all manner of subjects. Much of the accumulation is handed to Miss Normand who dictates the replies. Some of the letters, such as requests for photographs are handled by the ordinary routine.

Last month one letter was received from a wealthy but eccentric lady residing in South Carolina who expressed her desire to adopt Miss Normand. In part the letter follows:

"One of my amusements in this little Southern town is visiting the moving picture theatre. I thought it was a very sinful sort of pleasure for several years until I was induced to make a visit with a friend, but I have found that it is really innocent of evil consequences. I have seen you in

many pictures and am full of sympathy for the rough treatment that you receive in some of them. How much better it would be if you could live in a quiet, restful place such as this?"

Mabel replied, thanking the dear old lady for her sincere kindness but assuring her that rest and quiet were as foreign to her nature as the Swanee River is to icebergs.

* * * * *

June 24, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mabel Normand has engaged a cottage at Venice and spends much time there. Her town house is not closed for the summer, however, as she motors from beach to city and back daily.

* * * * *

June 24, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

...Mabel Normand recently paid \$45 for hospital service when her blue-ribbon cat became ill. After the cat was discharged as cured it was brought home and died the following day. Henceforth Miss Normand will purchase nothing but stuffed cats.

* * * * *

June 24, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

The huge concrete tank which serves as an artificial lake in the making of Keystone comedies, is a popular spot during the warm summer days. As soon as the light begins to go in the afternoon the greater portion of the Keystoneers don bathing suits, and as much rivalry exists among the many

expert swimmers, the impromptu competitions are of interest to the crowd that surrounds the tank. Mabel Normand leads in swimming skill and is really a wonderful mistress of aquatic sports. She excels in high diving, long and short distance swimming and duration under water.

One day last week Fred Fishback, a powerful young man who acts as assistant director for Walter Wright, was stunned by contact with the side of the tank through a misjudged dive. Although an excellent swimmer, he was rendered temporarily helpless and would have been in great danger of drowning had not Miss Normand plunged in and rescued him.

* * * * *

July 8, 1915
PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

No medals have ever been pinned on Raymond Hitchcock's manly breast for proficiency in equestrian sports, but since he became a member of Mack Sennett's Keystone comedy forces he has not refused to take a chance at anything that has been suggested when the value of a picture has been at stake. So when he was requested to ride an emotional horse in the high with no emergency brake, he bravely mounted and exhibited all the nonchalance of old Colonel Cody himself. But the horse knew the difference, and, taking the bit in his teeth, he set out to shatter a few records. "Hitchy" did a Todd Sloan crouch and he and his mount disappeared in a cloud of dust.

Miss Mabel Normand, who rides as if she had been born in the saddle, saw the getaway and leaped onto her mount, following in the wake of the runaway. After a half mile chase, she caught up and grasped "Hitchy's" bridle, pulling up his steed and rescuing a panting star from what might have been a serious fall. After changing horses Mr. Hitchcock resumed the scene and all was well. The picture, one of Mr. Sennett's latest two reel features, will soon be released.

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July 8, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mabel Normand, featured Keystone star, owns a summer home in Bear Valley, and one of the greatest delights of her life is to take parties of friends on weekend parties. This summer, however, the important parts she is playing in two reel features make it impossible to get away from the studio long enough to make the trip up into the hills, so Miss Normand has engaged a cottage at Santa Monica and motors to and from the beach daily. Merry gatherings at this seaside residence take the place of the hunting and fishing trips that had been planned for the Bear Valley visits but the "Queen of the Movies" contemplates enjoying a week or two at her mountain home later in the season.

* * * * *

July 22, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mabel Normand, featured star with the Keystone Film Company, had three whole days vacation and she took advantage of her rest. Last winter Miss Normand purchased a sixty-foot yacht and had it thoroughly overhauled and refurnished throughout. When it was completed it was a thing of beauty--but since the rainy season the "Queen of the Movies" has been too busy helping Mack Sennett take advantage of the sunny weather in making of Keystone two-reel features to find time for yachting. When the three-day vacation came along Mabel stocked up the craft and took a party of friends to Catalina, cruising around the island and enjoying the breezes, fishing and quiet of the Pacific in its most pacific condition.

* * * * *

July 29, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mabel Normand killed a five foot rattler last week. As she was motoring through a canyon south of Los Angeles she caught sight of some flowers and stepped from her car to pick them. While walking through a clump of sage brush she heard the ominous sound of a rattler and jumped to one side just in time to escape its strike. Seizing a stick which lay nearby she struck at the reptile and quite by accident she admits, caught it fairly on the head, stunning it. Picking up a heavy stone she crushed its head. In order to prove her story was not of the fish variety she threw the snake into her car and brought it to the studio.

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July 29, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mack Sennett, managing director of the Keystone Film company, took a group of Keystone players to San Francisco to attend the ball which marked the closing of the Exhibitors' Convention last week. With Mr. Sennett were Mabel Normand, Fred Mace, Owen Moore, Charlie Murray and others. The party remained in San Francisco three days, visiting the Fair and returning on Tuesday, July 20th, with the exception of Mr. Sennett, who went to Denver and up into the San Juan country of Colorado, where he will spend a short vacation in the mountains, fishing and resting before returning to Los Angeles a week later.

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July 29, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mabel Normand Routs Burglar

Mabel Normand, Keystone star, put a burglar to rout in an unrehearsed

comedy scene at the Keystone studio one afternoon last week. It was late and nearly everyone had left for home. Miss Normand motored to the studio from her cottage at the beach, having forgotten a suitcase which she had left in her dressing room. A daylight burglar had walked through the studio entrance while the watchman was not looking and had gone up to the second tier of dressing rooms. When Miss Normand arrived she entered her room and found the roughly clad man bending over her trunk. Thinking him to be the janitor she was not frightened while the intruder immediately became panic stricken. As he backed out of the room Miss Normand picked up a heavy medicine ball which was lying in her room, and flung it at the man, striking him on the chest. "Take that old thing out and put it in the property room," she exclaimed. "It's too hot to exercise except at the beach." The man was taken by surprise--the force of the ball overbalanced him and he fell over the railing on the balcony and to the floor below. Before Miss Normand could rush to his aid he had picked himself up and the last seen of him he was running toward the hills at top speed.

* * * * *

August 5, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mack Sennett, Fred Mace, Mabel Normand, Raymond Hitchcock and others have been working at the beaches during the past hot week. It is strange how readily a director may switch his story so that the beach scenes are absolutely indispensable when the weather gets too hot to be comfortable at the studio.

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August 5, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mabel Normand, Keystone star, took exception to the statement of a Los

Angeles "reformer" to the effect that no girl can work in motion pictures and retain her respectability. She wrote an article in reply which was immediately purchased by a national newspaper syndicate and it will be widely published at once.

* * * * *

August 19, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mabel Normand, the favorite Keystone star, has written a song which will be published in the near future. Miss Normand is an accomplished musician and frequently entertains her friends with her vocal and instrumental accomplishments, but this is her first attempt at really publishing a song. She sang the ditty to her own piano accompaniment while Harry Williams and Jean Schwartz were present at her home one night this week and they enthused over the beauty of the thing, have urged her to take immediate action toward having it published.

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August 26, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mabel Normand, star of the Keystone Film company, got word one day recently that one of the seven Foy children was celebrating a birthday at the Foy bungalow down at Santa Monica. Mr. Foy was out with his director and supporting company working on a scene which was being made several miles from Los Angeles. Mabel was anxious to send a birthday present to the Foylet in question but not knowing whether it was one of the boys or one of the girls she was unable to decide on anything appropriate. So she called her car, drove to town and bought a gift for each of the seven and had her chauffeur hasten to the Foy party and deliver the goods. "I'm glad I never worked in the same company with Brigham Young," was Miss Normand's conclusion.

* * * * *

September 4, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Octopus Seizes Mabel Normand

In making My Valet, Mack Sennett wrote in some scenes in which Mabel Normand and Fred Mace have a struggle in the surf. The scenes were taken at the beach at Santa Monica, where the surf is high at full tide and Mabel, being an excellent swimmer, did some astonishing work in the swirling waters. In one scene she is tied to a rock and the waves dash over her, completely submerging her at times. In this scene Miss Normand struggled frantically and Sennett and the other members of the company applauded her for her cleverness. When the scenes were over the struggles and cries of Miss Normand continued and Sennett swam out to where she was tied. Immediately he called for help and a half dozen men swam to him. It was found that a middle-sized devil fish had hold of Miss Normand's ankles and she had been held throughout the scene by the monster. She was released after a fight with the fish and it was soon killed. Miss Normand was almost hysterical for a few minutes but soon recovered her nerve and continued work. To those who see My Valet, it will be interesting to know that in the scene in which she is tied to the rock the sea terror has a firm hold on her feet and ankles.

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September 25, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mabel Normand Held Up

Mabel Normand, Keystone star, was the victim of footpads one night last week. Returning from the home of a friend located a block and a half from

her own residence, Miss Normand refused to depend upon an escort and, merrily bidding her hostess and other friends goodnight, started homeward. She had not gone more than a block when a masked man stepped out from behind a tree and commanded her to put her hands up. "I never obeyed an order quicker in my life," said Miss Normand the next day in telling of her experience, "and I kept them up until the brut was convinced I had really left my purse at home and then I kept them up until I reached home. For once in my life I was scared out of my wits." The would-be thief escaped.

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October 16, 1915
PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

While Miss Mabel Normand, Keystone Film Company star, is still confined to her home as a result of the nearly fatal injuries which recently resulted from an accident at the studios, she is out of danger and well on the road to complete recovery. During her illness bulletins were read in cafes, theaters and other public places not only in Los Angeles, but in many other parts of the country. Miss Normand has probably made more people laugh than any other screen comedienne and the millions who have admired her beauty and

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October 16, 1915
PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mabel Normand has completely recovered from her recent serious illness and has gone to San Francisco, where she will spend several weeks taking a complete rest visiting the Exposition. Miss Normand was in San Francisco with Roscoe Arbuckle and a company early in the year, and while there made a number of comedies, but was unable to spend much time at the Exposition. She is now taking advantage of the opportunity, and as soon as she has sufficiently rested, will return to Los Angeles.

* * * * *

November 20, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Appearing in her first picture since the accident which nearly resulted in her death some weeks ago, Mabel Normand, the Keystone star, was injured Wednesday when a runaway monoplane got beyond control of its amateur driver, comedian Chester Conklin. The movie queen was dragged along the rough ground for nearly 100 yards. She was given immediate medical attention and rushed to her home, where she is reported as recuperating rapidly.

Conklin was in the driver's seat and before he could extricate himself was severely burned on the legs and arms by gasoline which caught fire from the hot motor.

The machine, completely demolished, was a military monoplane and was being used in the filming of a comedy. Conklin was instructed to cut off the power after he had rolled a short distance down the field. Becoming confused, he opened the throttle and the increase in power caused the machine to shoot into the air.

* * * * *

March 11, 1916

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Although Miss Mabel Normand has been away from her friends and associates of many years making comedies in the snow and ice in the east, her Keystone friends at the Edendale studio receive an almost daily letter from the popular leading woman. Miss Normand writes the east is wonderful. She says she has been fascinated by Broadway, but in between the lines the letters all sound as if the young woman would not be sorry when the director general, Mack Sennett, issued orders for Miss Normand to bring her company back to California.

Roscoe Arbuckle is directing Miss Normand while she is in the east, but is due to leave for the west with his company in about a month. On the way home they will stop and make comedies at nearly every important city.

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April 22, 1916
PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Mabel Normand, erstwhile Keystone comedienne, but now an aspiring dramatic star, arrived in Los Angeles this week to begin her new duties as an artiste under the supervision of Thomas H. Ince. She went immediately to her home in Hollywood, and is now awaiting word from Ince to start work before the camera in her first vehicle for the Triangle. What is particularly important in connection with Miss Normand's new venture is the fact that she will not do her work at either the Culver City or Inceville plant of the New York Motion Picture Corporation, but will have a studio of her own. This is a four-acre tract midway between Los Angeles and Hollywood, on which property a studio is now in course of erection. Here Miss Normand will preside as queen over a large company of players, who will be used as her permanent supporting cast in each of the plays in which she will appear. She will have her own director, who, although not yet named, will have immediate charge of the directorial end of her work. Each play will be made under the personal supervision of Ince and be released as a Triangle-Kay Bee subject. What story in which Miss Normand will make her first appearance as an Ince luminary has not been announced, but rumors are to the effect that the scenario is being prepared by J. G. Hawks of the Ince staff writers.

* * * * *

May 20, 1916
PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

With a story just as attractive as the little star herself, Miss Mabel

Normand and her own company of players began rehearsals last week. Although Miss Normand has her own studio, her relations with the Keystone Film Company, where she was featured for so many years, are very close, the rehearsals being held on the old stage where Miss Mabel once upon a time worked with hose, bomb, and pie. Mack Sennett and Hampton Del Ruth lent their aid at the first rehearsals, just as in the past.

"I am more than delighted with everything," Miss Normand said when asked if she would say a word about her future plans. "I am sure I have the best equipped studio for its size in the country. I am more than satisfied with the first story selected. I feel sure I have regained my old good health again, and now I am anxious to hear Mr. Young say 'camera' and begin work again."

Fragments from Official 1922 Statements: Fellows, Dumas, Maigne

The following newspaper article published in 1937 purports to contain extracts from the official 1922 statements made by Howard Fellows, Vern Dumas, and Charles Maigne.

* * * * *

June 10, 1937
LOS ANGELES EXAMINER

Coterie of Dead Central Figures in Slaying Case

Like phantom characters who have left the stage forever, yet play important parts in the gripping development of a drama, are many of the central figures in the William Desmond Taylor case.

They are dead--but ever present in this amazing murder mystery.

Their spoken lines have echoed through the years--now to play important roles in the untangling of the steel web which heretofore has enmeshed the truth of the sensational slaying and have aided in promise of final solution of the puzzle that defied investigation for fifteen years.

Mabel Normand, the whimsical Peter Pan of the silent screen; Mrs. Julia Miles, "mama" to Margaret Fillmore and her sister, Mary Miles Minter the beautiful; Henry Peavey, Taylor's eccentric servant; District Attorneys Thomas Lee Woolwine, dashing, fiery Southerner, and his successor, Asa Keyes; Detective Sergt. Tom Ziegler; Charles Maigne, motion picture director and friend of Taylor--they are among the coterie of dead.

They are gone, but the words or deeds of many of them have been carefully preserved through the years and now are vital links in a chain of evidence that authorities feel cannot be broken.

In musty files and worn transcripts these links are recorded as part of the file in the present case. Most of them were taken by Woolwine in 1922.

Strange were the stories told in the documents--but no stranger than the destiny that was Taylor's.

Hundreds of questions filled the minds of the investigators as they pored over the yellow pages--

MOTIVE--that was one question.

What part, if any, did Taylor's friendship with Mabel Normand play in the tragic ending of his life.

What possible hidden knowledge did the Negro servant possess to have exhibited the fear he did?

What was behind the tense moment a few weeks before his murder when a gay party he had attended with Miss Normand was punctuated by a sobbing statement from the director that was strange and pathetic?

Howard Fellows, youthful chauffeur for Taylor, related to the authorities the unusual incident of the last New Year's Eve party Taylor was destined to attend at the Alexandria Hotel with Miss Normand.

They had known each other for several years--had worked together--

played together--their friendship ostensibly was a happy one. Possibly it was even love.

Yet, according to Fellows, as he drove Miss Normand and the director home from the celebration, the latter, in a voice tinged by a sob, leaned close to his companion, and said:

"Little girl, you are breaking my heart."

Did this outburst play any part in the tragedy, that followed?

Taylor had his secret sorrows--what they were has been hidden by a veil never penetrated--he was "never happy"--"never sad."

Again Fellows, through his statement, speaks after these many years:

"Mr. Taylor to me seemed the same way all the time--never happy; never real sad, except once. Was that way all the time."

What mystery could Henry Peavey, the loyal servant who died in an institution, have unraveled, had not his master's murder sent him into paroxysms of fear?

"I have been scared ever since my master was murdered," Peavey scrawled on a note just before he died.

On the morning of February 2, 1922, the man he served and liked was lying on the floor of his bungalow when Peavey unlocked the front door. He called neighbors. One of them was Vern Dumas, oil man--a Southerner.

"He was wringing his hands. He was rolling over like a ball," Dumas told District Attorney Woolwine.

He was scared to death and tears rolled down his cheeks.

"I really felt sorry, felt like wiping away the tears myself."

Charles Maigne, the director, told what he knew.

In his business Maigne had to have a mind for detail--for the fine points that make great photoplays--to his practiced eye the death scene of his fellow director was full of intrigue.

"The thing that struck me the hardest of all, after I got over the shock of Bill's death," he told questioners, "was wondering how on earth Bill could have fallen the way he did. The position that Bill was in stumped me for two solid days. I couldn't figure out how he had fallen that way. If he

had been sitting in his chair and had been shot, or if had been shot in the back with his back to the door, he was lying stretched out with his feet towards the door, hands by his side--"

These are but a few of the characters whom death has claimed as the years rolled by while investigators grimly plodded on to the complete solution.

Any of these points, authorities say, may suddenly become the vital connecting link through which disjointed, unrelated facts will suddenly assume importance.

There also was Mrs. Miles, grandmother of Mary Miles Minter, star of the silent screen, whom Taylor had directed and whom the star had loved.

She solaced Mary in the dark hours of grief--Mrs. Miles is dead and no known statement of hers remains.

The Federal Trade Commission vs. Famous Players-Lasky

From 1916 to 1922, William Desmond directed films for Famous Players-Lasky (or one of its component companies). In 1921 the Federal Trade Commission charged Famous Players-Lasky with "conspiracy and restraint of trade." The complaint and subsequent hearings give background details into the business practices of the organization which employed Taylor.

* * * * *

September 1, 1921

NEW YORK WORLD

Acts to Dissolve Big Lasky Concern as "Movie Trust"

Washington, Aug. 31--Describing it as the "largest concern in the motion picture industry and the biggest theatre owner in the world," the Federal Trade Commission has formally charged the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation and eleven other corespondents with "conspiracy and restraint of trade" in violation of the anti-trust laws.

Those named with the Lasky Corporation are the Stanley Company of America, the Stanley Booking Corporation, Black New England Theatres, Inc., Southern Enterprises, Inc., Sanger Amusement Company, Adolph Zukor, Jesse L. Lasky, Jules Mastenbaum, Alfred S. Black, Stephen A. Lynch and Ernest V. Richards Jr.

The respondents, a formal announcement of the commission asserts, are given thirty days to answer the specific allegations in the complaint, after which the date of the trial of the charges will be set.

The complaint, as made public today, alleges that "as a result of the conspiracies and combinations set out and the acquisitions and affiliations made in pursuance of said conspiracies and combinations, the respondent, the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, now owns more than four hundred theatres in the United States and Canada, and has numerous others affiliated with it.

"It has formed producing companies in Great Britain, France, Belgium, Spain, Scandinavian countries, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and a \$3,000,000 corporation for the production and distribution of motion pictures in India."

The complaint declares that "in furtherance of the conspiracy charged, the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation acquired the New York Theatre Building, containing the Criterion, the New York Theatre and the New York Roof, at a cost of \$3,200,000; that the respondents acquired the Rivoli and Rialto, in the same district of New York, as well as the property on which the Putnam Building is located, where it proposed in the near future to erect a thirty-story building to cost \$8,000,000 and to contain a motion picture theatre."

"The Famous Players-Lasky Corporation," it is stated, "also acquired the stock of Charles Frohman, Inc., which leases the Empire Theatre and has an interest in the Lyceum Theatre.

It is charged by the commission that the producing and distribution of

more than 30,000 films every week by the respondent, from its studios in California and New York principally and the transportation of great quantities of unexposed films and large quantities of scenery, paraphernalia, costumes and similar stage properties give the commission jurisdiction.

In the calendar year, it is asserted, approximately 18,000 theatres exhibited motion pictures in the United States and 20,000,000 people every day spend \$4,000,000 to see pictures. In 1916 the motion picture industry was in the hands of three different units, none of which was affiliated with each other--producers, distributors and exhibitors.

"The Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, Adolph Zukor and Jesse L. Lasky, combined and conspired to secure control and monopolize the motion picture industry, and restrain, restrict and suppress competition in interstate commerce in motion picture films," said the announcement of the commission today. "In pursuance of this conspiracy and combination, the complaint charges that the respondents acquired in 1916 Bosworth, Inc.; Jesse L. Lasky Feature and Play Company and the Famous Players' Film Company, and that since the time of such acquisition the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation has and still owns the whole of the stock of the firms mentioned, and that the effect of such acquisition has eliminated competition between such corporations and tends to create a monopoly in such commerce in the motion picture industry."

It is charged that "prior to the incorporation of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation in July, 1916, the three concerns mentioned released and distributed all of their pictures films through Paramount Pictures Corporation, New York, the only organization of the kind that had facilities for nationwide distribution."

Paramount Pictures were well known to exhibitors and the public. The Paramount concern had a "closed booking" policy. Its pictures were leased on the condition that the entire lot of 104 would be taken and the person using them would not exhibit pictures of any competitor." This arrangement applied to the first run.

"Under this plan," the commission says, "no exhibitor could lease a single first run, but as to the second and third runs, a different policy was

pursued. While there was no competition among Bosworth, Inc., Jesse L. Lasky Feature and Play Company and the Famous Players Film Company for the leasing of films for first runs, there was free and open competition for the second and third runs or repeats."

In furtherance of its conspiracy, the commission asserts, the Famous Players-Lasky Company, through its President, Mr. Zukor, sought to acquire the Paramount Pictures Corporation.

"Failing to do so, and to avoid former contracts," the announcement says, "Zukor incorporated the Artcraft Picture Corporation in 1916, which corporation engaged in competition with the Paramount Corporation in leasing and distributing motion picture films.

"At the time of its organization the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation employed many popular film stars, and as the contracts with certain of these expired they were not re-engaged by the respondent. Instead the respondent and Adolph Zukor organized certain new corporations and induced the stars to make service contracts with these newly formed corporations, which corporations the respondent and Zukor caused to contract with the Artcraft Pictures Corporation, whereby all films depicting the stars were exclusively leased and distributed through the Artcraft Pictures Corporation instead of the through the Paramount Pictures Corporation.

"Shortly thereafter the Paramount Corporation, because of the threatened impairment of the value of their holdings through the loss of pictures depicting these stars, became desirous of disposing of their holdings, and in 1916 the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation acquired the whole of the stock and share of the capital of the Paramount, the concern which had been in competition with the Artcraft Pictures Corporation."

The complaint declares that "the effect of this acquisition of the Paramount Corporation by the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation has been and is to eliminate competition in interstate commerce, and that it tends to create a monopoly, and that after the acquisition mentioned both the Paramount Corporation and the Artcraft Pictures Corporation ceased to function and were dissolved, and that thereafter the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, in

addition to producing films, entered the business of leasing and distributing such films directly to distributors without employing the medium of any distributing agency, and advertised to the trade and public film as Paramount Artcraft Pictures and Paramount Pictures."

The commission then described the extension of the "alleged conspiracy" to the producers.

It is set out that "after the respondent had acquired the concerns mentioned, and pursued the conspiracy and combination to control the motion picture industry, it inaugurated a policy of affiliating with it certain independent producers whose productions were of such quality and popularity that they were in great demand."

It further declares that "such independent producers" by contract "Leased and distributed their films through the respondent corporation" and in the same manner as the respondent's films, and that these independent productions are advertised and displayed as Paramount-Artcraft Pictures and Paramount Pictures.

"These independents are Thomas H. Ince, Mack Sennett, Cosmopolitan Productions, Mayflower Productions, George Fitzmaurice Productions, Sydney Chaplin Productions, Lois Weber Productions, William D. Taylor Productions, George Milford Productions, William A. Brady Productions.

"The commission charges that "In May, 1919, in accordance with the conspiracy the respondents incorporated the Realart Pictures Corporation and caused the Realart Pictures Corporation to maintain offices, exchanges and a selling organization separate from that of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, and concealed the respondent's ownership of the Realart Pictures Corporation, holding the latter out to the trade and public to be wholly independent and not affiliated or connected in any way with the respondents; and that many exhibitors who did not desire to lease Famous Players-Lasky films, did lease Realart Pictures Corporation films in the belief that they were not made or produced by the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation."

Acquisition of motion picture theatres through coercion and intimidation of owners into selling their theatres after threats of erecting competing

houses and of interfering with their film service as a furtherance of the conspiracy alleged is charged.

It is declared that in 1919 "the respondents entered into a comprehensive plan of extending the corporation's activities by the acquisition of theatres, particularly in the key cities. In pursuance of this programme, the respondents conspired, the complaint alleges, with the Black New England Theatres, Inc., of which Alfred S. Black is President, to secure control of the distribution and exhibition of motion pictures in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts, and that by acquisition of 50 per cent of the stock of the Black New England Theatres, Inc., the respondent controls more than sixty theatres in the states mentioned."

The complaint declares that further pursuing this programme the respondents "conspired with the Stanley Company of America, which owned or controlled more than fifty-seven theatres in Pennsylvania, Western New Jersey and Delaware; and with the Stanley Booking Corporation, owned by the Stanley Company of America, to secure control of the motion picture industry in this territory, and that as a result of this conspiracy the Paramount Pictures and Paramount-Artcraft Pictures are either shown exclusively or are given preference over others in the territory, and that well-known independent producers are either entirely excluded or are only able to lease their films at a loss or under undesirable conditions."

The same programme was followed, the complaint charges, as regards the Stephen A. Lynch Enterprises Corporation, which owns and operates theatres in the Atlantic and Gulf States from North Carolina to Texas and in Tennessee, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

* * * * *

Testimony of W. W. Hodkinson, Al Lichtman, Harris Connick, Walter Greene,
Samuel Goldwyn, W. L. Sherry, Walter Irwin, Joseph Boss, J. S. Burnham,
Benjamin Knobel

The following excerpted testimony is reprinted from the NEW YORK TELEGRAPH, and was originally published on the dates indicated.

* * * * *

April 24, 1923:

The first gun of the Federal Trade Commission's investigation as to whether the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, in conjunction with a number of subsidiaries and individuals, constitutes a trust under the Federal law, was fired yesterday at 29 West Thirty-ninth street, with W. W. Hodkinson in the witness chair...

The complaint alleges that the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, by progressive expansion, now dominates the exhibition field, through its ownership of production, distribution agencies and theatre holdings, and because of this combination of effort stifles competition, inasmuch as its competitors are unable to secure first run showings of their pictures. The complaint also charges that the corporation is the largest theatre owner in the world, and controls showings of the pictures through its ownership of Paramount Pictures, the distribution corporation...

Mr. Hodkinson was questioned at length concerning the early days of the Paramount Pictures Corporation, when he was its president, and described the first steps in the expansion and merging of the various groups of producers and distributors into the present organization.

Under examination of Mr. Fuller he declared that upon various occasions, as early as 1915, he had held conversations with Adolph Zukor relative to the advisability of combining the producing and distributing divisions of the industry. Mr. Hodkinson said that he had always been against such a combination and was of the same opinion yet, but that Mr. Zukor held different views. He also said that he and Mr. Zukor had on one or two occasions held meetings with exhibitors at which the possibilities of combining producing and exhibition were discussed.

Mr. Hodkinson was then asked to name the "first class, first run" motion

picture houses in New York City. He named six, and stated that three of these, the Rialto, Rivoli and Criterion theatres, were controlled by the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation. He was further asked to describe the effect of New York and "key city" picture presentation upon the success of a given picture, and replied that such presentation was considered as essential in the industry as an advertising point in the explanation of a production throughout the rest of the country...The witness said that the independents had no opportunity to show at the Rialto, Rivoli and Criterion...

* * * * *

April 25, 1923:

...Hodkinson said the practices by large producers and owners of a number of first-class theatres were detrimental to the industry.

"The history of the business has shown that the most successful pictures have been developed by individual efforts rather than by mass production, where there is no competition and no necessity to have special regard to quality," he said. "The independent producer being denied the patronage of the larger theatre does not receive compensation sufficient to successfully compete with other independent producers and this stands to lower the quality of the pictures."...

* * * * *

April 26, 1923:

Al Lichtman, president of Preferred Pictures, yesterday told how W. W. Hodkinson, president of the Paramount Pictures Corporation in 1916, was forced out of office by the board of directors after Adolph Zukor, head of Famous Players, had complained that he could not get along with them...

The witness traced the development of the Paramount organization from its start as a group of distributors to the present time, when it is interwoven closely with the Famous Players-Lasky forces and financial

backing.

Lichtman, who was field manager for Famous Players in 1912, declared the company entered into a distributing agreement with the then newly organized Paramount Corporation for twenty-five years.

Early in 1916, the witness said, Mr. Zukor had become dissatisfied because he said that under the arrangement with the Paramount he was not receiving money enough to produce the kind of pictures he wanted and that he was threatened with the loss of some of his great stars, especially Mary Pickford. Zukor had told him, the witness said, that Mutual had offered Mary Pickford \$10,000 a week.

The witness said it was at about this time, after a visit of Zukor to California, that he got in touch with Hiram Abrams, a director of the Paramount company. He repeated to Abrams that Zukor had expressed himself dissatisfied with the contract with Paramount. Zukor said, according to the witness, that if he stayed with Paramount he would be unable to keep his stars and maintain the quality of the pictures he was making.

The witness said that Abrams went with the latter's partner, Walter Green, and himself to see Zukor at his home. They had a conference, he said, in the course of which Zukor declared he found it impossible to get along with Hodkinson, and it was agreed among them that Abrams and Green were to see if they could not get two of the other four directors to vote with Abrams in deposing Hodkinson. Ten days later, Lichtman said, he learned that a meeting had been held and Abrams, Steele and Sherry, three of the five directors of the company, had voted to put Hodkinson out of the presidency, had elected Abrams president in his place, and elected Steele treasurer.

Lichtman was asked about his own pictures. He said he was producing and distributing Preferred Pictures at this time and has twelve a year, all feature pictures. He spoke of the difficulty he has in some cities in placing his films in first run theatres owing to the fact that most of the first class houses are owned or controlled by the big producers.

He got along all right in San Francisco, he said, but characterized conditions in Atlanta as "terrible," saying Southern Enterprises, a

subsidiary of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, controls three of the five theatres in the city...

As to New York, Mr. Lichtman said, he had only succeeded in placing on Broadway four pictures in the last two years out of twenty-four pictures...

The witness said that, generally speaking, a producer expects about 25 per cent of the gross earning of a picture from first run theatres.

Mr. Lichtman told of a number of places where the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation or some other large producer owning first run theatres would reject pictures offered by an independent producer on the plea that they had no open time. He mentioned theatres in various cities which, while not owned by one of the large producing companies, would use all the pictures made by one of those companies, leaving only a small amount of time available to all the others...

He was asked if he knew H. E. H. Conick, and said he had met him in 1919 when the latter had come to the office of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation to investigate the corporation in the interest of a group of bankers who were considering underwriting a stock issue of \$10,000,000. He said Mr. Conick was shown every consideration, allowed to examine the records; that later the sale of stock was made, and, still later, Conick became chairman of the finance committee of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, and was still holding that position when he left the corporation in 1921.

The witness said the intention of the corporation when it secured the \$10,000,000 was to use the money to build or purchase a theatre in "key" cities of the country, where it was impossible to get advantageous contracts...

He said there are thirty "key" cities in the country and approximately 120 first-class first-run theatres in those cities.

* * * * *

April 27, 1923:

Mr. Lichtman said there are approximately 14,000 moving picture theatres in the United States, seating about 8,000,000 persons, and he estimated that about 10,000,000 persons attended performances daily as conditions are now. He said conditions now are only fairly prosperous: that in 1920 and also in part of 1918 more persons witnessed the pictures daily...

Asked to state the condition confronting the independent producer and distributor as compared with the producer and distributor who owns or controls a number of theatres, the witness said:

"The small producer is at a disadvantage, for the producer who owns theatres can figure fairly well on what his receipts at first will be."...

* * * * *

April 28, 1923:

...Harris D. H. Connick, of 511 Fifth Avenue, who made an investigation in 1919 for Kuhn, Loeb & Co., into the motion picture industry, with special reference to the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, was the first witness. He said he was a graduate of Stanford University and was director of works of the Panama Pacific Exposition.

The witness said he came to New York in 1916 and was vice president of the American International Corporation.

He told of having made the survey in the Fall of 1919 for Kuhn, Loeb & Co., who, he said, wanted the information in connection with underwriting a \$10,000,000 stock issue of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation. He said the Famous-Players got the \$10,000,000 with a view to investing it in theatres. In December, 1919, he said he joined the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation.

Asked his duties, he said:

"I went in as chairman of the finance committee and also as a sort of manager under Mr. Zukor. I had all the duties of a general manager."

He said he and Mr. Zukor had innumerable conferences over the plan to secure theatres.

"Mr. Zukor's plan was to acquire a number of modern theatres in 'key'

cities, so he could get his pictures without fail in first-run theatres in those cities."

The witness said that he left the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation in December, 1921. He said in 1920 Mr. Zukor feared only the competition of the First National Corporation, and said there were negotiations looking to an arrangement between the two organizations for increasing the sale of pictures.

"The primary object of these conferences," said Mr. Connick, "was to get a working agreement with the First National, or, its component parts. They wanted to make some arrangement which would do away with competition between the companies in employing stars, buying stories, and in every way."...

"While you were discussing these plans, did Mr. Zukor ever say to you that, by working out his plans, he could dominate the motion picture industry?" asked Mr. Farrington.

"Mr. Zukor was under the impression that Famous Players could then dominate the situation," replied Mr. Connick, "and that his plan would give permanency to this."...

Asked whether he thought the power of the screen was good or evil, the witness said: "As a matter of course the screen has a lot of power and is unquestionably one of the educational influences of the day."

Asked what would be the result if large producers should acquire fifty per cent of the theatres in the country, Mr. Connick said that it would be a very profitable thing for the producers, but said that the independent producer would have a difficult time placing his pictures unless the picture was of superlative quality. He said that the owner of the theatre, if he was a producer, would naturally use his own pictures because they would make more money for him, but said they would find time to put on a picture of an independent producer if it was exceptionally good and a sure moneymaker.

On cross-examination Mr. Connick said in reply to questions of Mr. Swaine that the motion picture business was "a very boastful business."

"When you said this morning that Famous Players dominated the motion picture industry, what did you mean?" asked Mr. Swaine.

"I meant that compared in every way they were better than any other concern in the motion picture field," replied the witness.

"In the same way, would you say that Caruso dominated the operatic field?" queried Mr. Swaine.

"Well, not exactly," said Mr. Connick. "God Almighty had a good deal to do with Caruso and he did not have much to do with the Famous Players Corporation."...

Mr. Swaine asked the witness if it was not the growing competition of the First National organization that prompted Mr. Zukor and the other officials of Famous Players to buy theatres.

"The idea was to get rid of competition," said Mr. Connick, "trying to clean them right up. It was a case of dog eat dog."

The witness said that First National was not as threatening as its thousands of franchise and sub-franchise holders might seem to indicate, pointing out that only a few hundred of the theaters were large ones, the great majority being small houses. He said First National had at least one theatre in every "key" city of the country...

* * * * *

May 1, 1923:

...Walter E. Greene, vice president of the American Release Corporation, who was a partner with Hiram Abrams in an independent distributing exchange in 1916, told of the formation of the Paramount Pictures Corporation by a number of distributors from all sections of the country, of which W. W. Hodkinson of California was elected president.

Questioned by Mr. Farrington, counsel for the Commission, Mr. Green told how in May, 1916, Adolph Zukor, the president of the Famous Players Corporation, had become dissatisfied with the way its pictures were being handled by the Paramount Pictures Corporation and the witness said he had been told by his partners, Abrams and Alexander Lichtman, that Mr. Zukor had threatened to leave the Paramount Pictures Corporation, although he had a 25-

year contract with it, unless some changes were made in its policy.

The witness said that following Mr. Zukor's return from a visit to California in May, 1916, that he, Abrams, Lichtman and Mr. Zukor had a conference at the home of the latter, at which Mr. Zukor said that he found it hard to get along with Hodkinson, and suggested that Hodkinson be removed as president and that Abrams be substituted in his place. He said they came to an agreement while at Zukor's home that if possible they would have Hodkinson deposed, and also the treasurer of Paramount Picture Corporation, a man named Pawley, removed. It was also agreed that Zukor should have 50 per cent of the stock of the Paramount Corporation...

Mr. Greene told of the organization of Artcraft Pictures about July, 1916, of which he was elected president. He said the object of the Artcraft Pictures was to distribute pictures by Mary Pickford and other high-class stars. He said the Famous Players Corporation furnished the funds to organize the Artcraft Pictures, but the latter was advertised as an independent company.

Mr. Greene said the Famous Players Corporation took over the Paramount Pictures Corporation in May or June, 1917, and that the Artcraft and Paramount were merged. He said it was in the Summer of 1917 that he first heard of the plan to acquire first run theatres. At first it was planned to make contractual arrangements with certain first run theatres by which the Famous Players pictures would be given to these theatres provided they took a majority of the corporation's pictures. But this plan fell through, he said, and then they decided upon buying or leasing theatres...

The witness was asked about Mr. Zukor's connection with Lewis J. Selznick in the Summer of 1917. He said they formed the Select Pictures Corporation in which Famous Players had a half interest. He said the business policy of the Select Pictures Corporation was discussed by the executive committee of Famous Players Corporation, but that practically all the transactions connected with the production of pictures were carried on by Mr. Zukor and Mr. Selznick. This arrangement lasted only a year, he said, Famous Players selling its half interest to Mr. Selznick. Soon after this

the Realart Corporation was organized with the financial help of Famous Players Corporation. he said the organization of this corporation was to provide an outlet for a secondary list of pictures, which it was thought could be released to better advantage through another organization.

He said at first it was not generally known that the Realart Corporation was a subsidiary of Famous Players, but it became known within a few weeks...

Mr. McDonald asked Mr. Green if the organization of Artcraft Corporation had not been made at the special request of Mary Pickford and because she insisted her pictures should not be distributed with other pictures, and the witness said he understood such was the case...

* * * * *

May 2, 1923:

...Samuel Goldwyn, formerly head of the Goldwyn Pictures Corporation, testified that after the formation of that company in 1917, great difficulty was experienced by the company in getting its pictures shown in important cities, due to control of theatres by the Paramount-Famous Players interests and the franchises of the Associated First National.

Mr. Goldwyn said he entered the motion picture business in 1923 [sic] when, in partnership with Jesse L. Lasky, he formed the Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Company. Cecil B. DeMille was also associated with them, he said. This company produced its first picture in the Spring of 1914, he testified, and at this time the Paramount Company was organized to distribute films and films of Famous Players.

The output of these two concerns did not furnish continuous programs throughout the year, and so the Paramount Company itself became a producer, Mr. Goldwyn said. This arrangement was unsatisfactory to the Company, and negotiations were begun for the consolidation of the Lasky Company with Famous Players, with the expectation that Paramount could be induced to join, making one big company.

The Famous Players Lasky combination was effected and then a \$25,000,000

corporation was planned to include the Paramount and some other interests. The deal was not consummated due to inability of all parties to agree as to the time. The proposal, however, served to influence the Paramount Company to make better terms.

This consolidation of Famous Players and Lasky took place in 1917 [sic], and following this, in connection with other proposed measures, Goldwyn said, he went to California. While he was away from New York, Adolph Zukor, who represented the Famous Players interests, wrote a letter to the board of directors saying that either he or Goldwyn must leave the organization, the witness testified.

Upon his return to New York, Lasky, who had been his partner in the beginning and is his brother-in-law, came to him and told him of the Zukor letter, Goldwyn said, and announced his intention of voting for Zukor. Goldwyn said he was thus forced to resign.

After he left the Famous Players Company, Mr. Goldwyn said, he formed the Goldwyn Pictures Corporation, and it was then that he found it very difficult to obtain a showing for his pictures, due to the control of theatres by the Paramount-Famous Players interests and the Associated First National...

About 1917 the contract which the Famous Players Company had with Mary Pickford expired, Mr. Goldwyn said, and Miss Pickford, having learned that Charlie Chaplin had made a contract with First National for eight pictures at \$1,075,000, insisted on \$10,000 a week. This made it necessary for the Famous Players-Lasky Company to get more for her pictures than could be obtained under their contract with Paramount. Thus came into being the Artcraft Company, which later added several other stars...

* * * * *

May 3, 1923:

W. L. Sherry, vice president of the Paramount Pictures Corporation, owner of a motion picture exchange in New York City, told yesterday ...how

after the Famous Players secured 51 per cent of the stock of Paramount Pictures by giving Famous Players stock in return for the Paramount picture stock, he had lost though his connection with the Famous Players Corporation stock estimated to be worth \$800,000...

Mr. Sherry said that the Paramount Pictures Corporation stock was selling at 80 at the time the deal was made with the Famous Players. That he was the largest stockholder in Paramount, and that at this price this stock was worth \$800,000.

He was given stock in the Famous Players Corporation, he said, and it was agreed that he was to have a contract to distribute the Famous Players pictures. He said some of the others connected with Paramount did get contracts for various territory. He mentioned one who received \$1,000 a week and 2 per cent of the gross.

Mr. Sherry said he never got his contract. The Paramount was taken over by Famous Players in 1915. Mr. Sherry said that several weeks following that he received no compensation, but afterwards was allowed a drawing account of \$250 a week. He said he was called to the home office and was there for a few weeks at the head of the purchasing department. He said he told Mr. Zukor that he did not like this, and Mr. Zukor had told him that he was glad to have a man like him as the head of the purchasing department.

"I realized," said Mr. Sherry, "that I had been brought down to the home office to make room for Arthur White, who was then with the Artcraft Company."

Mr. Sherry said that while drawing the \$250 a week he was distributing pictures in the New York territory.

He said in 1918 Mr. Zukor wanted him to buy a motion picture--"Joan the Woman"--for the New York territory.

He said he told Mr. Zukor that the picture was not worth that price, but finally at the solicitation of Mr. Zukor, said he bought the picture for \$100,000 in cash and gave his note for \$25,000, with the understanding that he was not to lose on the picture.

"Mr. Zukor gave me his promise in the presence of others," said Mr.

Sherry, "that I should not lose on the picture. He said if the Famous Players did not pay me for any loss I might have he would pay it himself."

M. T. Farrington, counsel to the commission, asked the witness how the picture turned out.

"The picture never grossed over \$5,000, if that," said Mr. Sherry. "I had been obliged to borrow the \$100,000 from the Irving National Bank, and put up my Famous Players stock as collateral on it. I was obliged to sell my stock to pay the loan and at this time the Famous Players discontinued paying the dividends and the stock fell so that I had to dispose of it at 22 to 30, at a great loss."

After he was brought to the home office he saw that they were trying to get him out of the exchange he had formerly owned and been running, and he resigned from the Famous Players Corporation and opened another exchange, he said. He was asked by Mr. Farrington whether he ever spoke to Mr. Zukor about the contract he had been promised after leaving the Famous Players.

"I spoke to Mr. Zukor on several occasions about it," he said, "telling him I had been cheated out of my contract. A few months ago I was entirely without money and I went to Mr. Zukor and told him that I needed money badly and he said he would put it up to the board of directors. They loaned me \$15,000, but not until I had signed an agreement waiving all claim on the Famous Players' Corporation, the Cardinal Film Company, which had produced the picture, 'Joan the Woman,' and Adolph Zukor. I had to sign the agreement to get the money. I paid interest on the loan, but I have been unable to do that recently and I still owe them the \$15,000. They canceled my note for \$25,000 which I gave at the time I purchased the picture."

* * * * *

May 8, 1923:

Walter W. Irwin, a pioneer in the film industry, who organized the old V. L. S. E. Distributing Corporation and was connected with the Famous Players company from 1916 to 1920, told how he happened to join the concern

at the request of Adolph Zukor, the president. The latter had mentioned to him that certain cities in the Middle West, notably St. Louis and Indianapolis, were not turning in an amount of revenue for his product that localities of such size ought to.

Accordingly, it was arranged that Mr. Irwin should make a survey of these cities and see what could be done to give the pictures better representation. He became vice president of the company. Investigating conditions in St. Louis, Mr. Irwin found that the best theatre was used by First National, with only an old auditorium left.

In order to obtain good showings in the city, he acquired some property opposite to the theatre of the rival circuit and had plans immediately drawn up of a theatre. This was built soon after.

In Indianapolis it was also necessary to build a theatre in order to guarantee first run showings that would influence small exhibitors in that district.

Questioned further by Daniel Farrington, counsel for the commission, Mr. Irwin declared the sales department had made up a statement on the returns from the so-called "key" cities, and this disclosed bad conditions, not only in St. Louis and Indianapolis, but also in Milwaukee, Toledo, New Haven, Pittsburgh, Boston and Cincinnati. In each of these latter cases no theatre was acquired at the time, except in New Haven.

The fight between the Famous Players and First National forces was outlined in detail by Mr. Irwin, who explained why the Paramount organization took drastic steps to face the competition of the new circuit.

He said at the time First National was formed it was claimed they were to be the champions of the exhibitors and would rescue them from the Famous Players' alleged trust.

He said Zukor told him that Mr. Williams and another member of the twenty-six men who made up the First National firm had sent word to him that they intended to get Mary Pickford away from him, and that no matter how much Zukor bid for her, First National would outbid him. Irwin said Zukor told him he was advised that he might as well stop bidding for Miss Pickford.

Zukor, he said, also told him Mary Pickford and her mother notified him they had received the same information. He said Zukor said to him that he did not propose to allow any man or group of men to destroy a business he had built up out of the hollow of his hand, and that he would fight in every possible way to prevent it. Zukor asked him what advice he could give him. He said he advised Zukor to tell the film industry through published affidavits and letters in the advertising column the purpose of the First National and their declared objects.

"I advised him," Irwin said, "to point out to the exhibitors that this alleged exhibitors' organization would only result in the increased price of pictures, through the bidding of the Famous Players for stars, result in increasing the prices tremendously, and also to tell the exhibitors that instead of the First National being their friend, it was their commercial enemy."

The witness said he advised Zukor that as a matter of self-protection, Famous Players should decline to serve pictures at the time to exhibitors or sub-exhibitors who held franchises of the First National on the ground that they were a part of the declared conspiracy to ruin Famous Players.

He said he told Zukor he felt justified that it was the proper action to take in face of the conditions. Irwin, who has been prominently identified with the film industry from 1909 on, and who served for a while as theatre manager for Famous Players, gave a survey of all of the different conditions covering the distributing system, from the first policy of selling the "program," "open booking," and the "rotary star" system.

He declared it was next to impossible for men who proposed to produce independent pictures to get financial backing unless the backer was assured he could contract for the distribution of pictures before the picture was made. The witness said that an open market for pictures was the only solution for conditions, and he decried the blocking system whereby groups of theatres have their programs booked months ahead through contracts with big distribution agencies and booking companies...

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May 11, 1923:

Joseph C. Boss, of Washington, D.C., who began his career as motion picture exhibitor in Philadelphia in 1904, was on the witness stand all day yesterday...Briefly, Mr. Boss's story is that S. A. Lynch, who was head of a district agency for Paramount Pictures, told him on the street in Dallas, Tex., that if he, Boss, put in a picture house at McAlester and took all Paramount pictures the company would not put in an opposition house. Acting on that verbal promise, he put in the house. That was in the latter part of 1919. In October of 1920, Mr. Boss testified, the Paramount people established a house across the street from him and about this time he began having trouble about the delivery of his lobby displays and could not get certain films...

* * * * *

May 17, 1923:

J. S. Burnham, who has operated motion picture theatres at Cortlandt, Auburn and Seneca Falls, N.Y. was placed on the stand yesterday before Commissioner E. C. Alvord of the Federal Trade Commission, inquiring into the operations of Famous Players Corporation to determine whether they act in restraint of trade...

Mr. Burnham said that a Mr. Rose, representing the Famous Players distributing office in Buffalo, called on him several times at Cortlandt, N.Y., where he had at that time two theatres. Mr. Rose wanted to sell him pictures. He wouldn't buy because he said the prices were too high and he would have to change admission prices if he bought them. After numerous calls by Rose another representative from the Buffalo office came back with Rose and the conference was heated. Mr. Burnham testified that they threatened him. This was ruled out as a conclusion of the witness. He was asked to repeat what was said. He couldn't recall what was said beyond

repeating several times that the conference was very heated and that he, in effect, told them to move on.

Shortly after that a series of four advertisements appeared in the Cortlandt Standard, a newspaper, asking the people of Cortlandt to demand of their theatre managers an opportunity to see Paramount Pictures. The advertisements declared that Cortlandt was about the only city in the State which was denied the privilege of seeing Paramount productions. As a result of these advertisements, Mr. Burnham testified, several of his patrons stopped him on the street and asked him why he did not run Paramount Pictures.

He told them that he could not afford to do so because they cost too much. On cross-examination he added that he told them the theatre was his and he would run in it the pictures he chose. Two postal cards mailed from Buffalo were also introduced in evidence. These cards asked him why he did not run Paramount Pictures. After the postal card and advertising campaign on behalf of Paramount another theatre, the Novelty, with a seating capacity of 225, changed its name to the Paramount-Novelty and began running Paramount Pictures...

* * * * *

May 22, 1923:

Benjamin Knobel...is one of the principal stockholders in companies which operate motion picture theatres in the Bronx and farther up....Mr. Knobel said he bought all the Paramount productions because he had been told that their plan of selling was all or none...Asked to be very definite, he said he was told this in the New York Famous Players office about August 18, 1922.

The witness complained that some of the pictures for which he had contracted were not released to him but that they appeared on Broadway and was unable to get them...

The question of adjustments on prices paid for pictures which did not

draw a paying business was discussed at length. The witness said he invited the Paramount distributing office manager in New York to examine his books and discovered that the Paramount office had already had a man at his theatre entrance "clocking" the crowd--that is, counting the people as they entered.

He objected to this means of checking business on the ground that a motion-picture theatre has a great many passes. He estimated the number at an average of 150 a day, but said that these passes do not come in an average way--that on some days they amount to 300. Nearly all of these passes are issued in payment for the privilege of posting window cards...

Charles A. Goldreyer, who is a partner with Mr. Knobel in four motion picture theatres and has another of his own, was the next witness. On direct examination he was asked if he bought the complete Paramount output because he had to in order to get any. He said he bought all of Paramount's output because he wanted all of it. He said several pictures for which he had contracts with Paramount were taken away from him and given to a competing theatre. He objected but got no answer...

He went over much the same ground as Mr. Knobel on the subject of "clocking" the crowd as a means of checking the business a theatre was doing. On the subject of number of passes, he said the Kinsbridge Theatre issued 500 passes a week, each for two persons, and that these are honored only on Mondays, Tuesday, Wednesdays and Thursdays...

"You have had continuous relations with Paramount since 1912, and have had friction over only the few pictures indicated in your testimony?" asked Mr. McDonald.

"Yes."

"On the picture 'Peter Ibbetson,' for which you paid \$2,000 and lost money, you received an adjustment of \$500, did you not?"

"Yes."

"There is nothing in the contract calling for that adjustment or any adjustment is there?"

"No."

"On the whole don't you think Paramount has dealt fairly well with you?"

"In some ways they are fair and in some ways not. If they had given back the whole \$2,000 for 'Peter Ibbetson' it would still have been a loss."

Rudolph Valentino Characterizes Charles Eyton

At the time of William Desmond Taylor's death, Charles Eyton was the studio manager of Famous Players-Lasky (Paramount), and he had worked closely with Taylor for many years. Shortly after Taylor's body was discovered, on the morning of February 2, 1922, Eyton was the senior studio official at the murder scene, and he subsequently testified at the coroner's inquest (See TAYLOROLOGY 61). Eyton was married to actress Kathlyn Williams.

Below is an extract from Rudolph Valentino's sworn affidavit filed on September 18, 1922, in the breach of contract lawsuit filed by Famous Players-Lasky against Rudolph Valentino, as reprinted in MOVIE WEEKLY.

* * * * *

December 2, 1922
Rudolph Valentino
MOVIE WEEKLY

...Mr. Lasky referred all matters possible to Mr. Charles Eyton as general manager of the studio and it was only when I went over Mr. Eyton's head to Mr. Lasky that I ever had an opportunity to talk to Mr. Lasky personally.

Mr. Charles Eyton was formerly a promoter of prize fights and later became manager of a theatre in Los Angeles in which one of the executives of Famous Players-Lasky Corporation has an interest, and subsequently became

general manager of the west coast studio of that company.

Mr. Eyton is a man of very dominating manner who believes in bullying first and reasoning later, if at all. I never made a single suggestion to Mr. Eyton during the entire making of "Blood and Sand" that was received agreeably by him, no matter how trivial or how fair it might be. He would always bluster and show fight.

Mr. Eyton is extremely unpopular at the west coast studio because of his domineering methods, but is retained there apparently by two of the executives of Famous Players-Lasky having to do with the west coast studios, who deem him useful to them...

Below is the sworn affidavit filed by Charles Eyton in the 1922 breach of contract lawsuit filed by Famous Players-Lasky against Rudolph Valentino, as reprinted in MOVIE WEEKLY.

* * * * *

Affidavit filed by Charles Eyton regarding Rudolph Valentino

December 9, 1922

MOVIE WEEKLY

Charles Eyton says that at all times herein mentioned he was and still is the general manager of the west coast activities of Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, that he knows Rodolph Valentino and has become particularly well acquainted with him since his employment by Famous Players-Lasky Corporation beginning January 1, 1921 and produced for that corporation among pictures entitled "The Sheik," "Moran of the Lady Letty," "Beyond the Rocks," "Blood and Sand" and "The Young Rajah," that his duties as general manager brought him in touch with Mr. Valentino very frequently at the Hollywood studio of

the corporation where affiant's office was and is.

That affiant acting for Famous Players-Lasky Corporation conducted some of the negotiations with said Valentino which resulted in the contract of employment of January 17, 1922 and under which contract produced "Blood and Sand" and "The Young Rajah"; that negotiations for the said contract of January 17, 1922 began on or prior to November 28, 1921, on which date said Valentino entered into a contract with the corporation for his services to play the leading male role in the production entitled "Beyond the Rocks," at a salary of \$1,000.00 per week and in which said agreement said Valentino granted to said contract an option upon his services as an artist in motion picture productions for the period of one year at a salary of \$1,250.00 per week beginning upon the day after the completion of "Beyond the Rocks," and also a second option for an additional period of one year at a weekly salary of \$2,000 per week and also a third option for an additional period of one year at a weekly salary of \$3,000 per week.

Without any pursuance of the said agreement of November 28, 1921, said agreement of January 17, 1922 was entered into and executed by the respective parties and the provisions of said agreement of November 28, 1921 were incorporated in the agreement of January 17, 1922, except the provisions with reference to the production of "Blood and Sand" within one year in Europe under the directorship of George Fitzmaurice or John S. Robertson which said provisions would have been inserted in the agreement of January 17, 1922 had not said Valentino consented and agreed that the said "Blood and Sand" should be produced under the directorship of Fred Niblo; that at the request and recommendation of said Valentino and his agent, Clifford Robertson, said corporation employed June Mathis and entered into a contract with her under date of December 19, 1922 to write the continuity of said "Blood and Sand" and also entered into a contract dated February 18, 1922 to scenario writing, adapting, supervising and general handling of stories for the corporation.

That a part of the negotiations for both the said contracts of November 28, 1921 and of January 17, 1922 with said Valentino were conducted by Jesse, Lasky that affiant was present during some of these negotiations and heard the

conversations between Mr. Lasky and said Valentino and his agent, that at no conference was any representations made by either affiant or Mr. Lasky with reference to the said contract to induce said Valentino to execute the same or for any other parties, nor any agreement or promises made or suggested which was not incorporated in the said agreement of January 17, 1922.

Affiant further says that prior to the said contract of November 28, 1922 and during the negotiations therefore, said Valentino upon several occasions said to affiant that he was anxious to become associated with the corporation, that his standing as a motion picture actor was greatly to be enhanced by securing a contract with Famous Players-Lasky Corporation; that he recognized the fact that it was better for him to be associated with this company than any other company, owing to the fact that three or four productions produced on the scale of magnificence that Famous Players-Lasky Corporation had heretofore produced, would advance him further on his way to stardom than any other means he could think of.

Affiant further says that it is a custom of this corporation to sign all of its stars for a period of a year with options of four additional years but that Valentino refused to sign for these periods, stating that three years association as a star with Famous Players-Lasky Corporation would make him so popular he would be entitled to a fabulous salary.

Affiant further says that he left for the Orient on March 25, 1922 and from the time of signing of Valentino of his said contract, up to that date Valentino had not at any time complained to affiant of any false or fraudulent misrepresentations made by any person during negotiations of the contract, but on the contrary told affiant he was very much elated and pleased with the splendid production and general all around support the corporation was giving him in "Blood and Sand," that the above statements were repeated to affiant by Valentino on several occasions; and that said Valentino told affiant how pleased he was to have Mr. Niblo as his director and June Mathis as his supervisor and scenario writer and the splendid costumes that were being brought from Spain especially for him.

Affiant further says that before production was started on "Blood and

Sand" the cast was talked over several times with said Valentino and approved by Valentino; that at this time Mr. Lasky stated to affiant specifically that as this was Mr. Valentino's first starring vehicle, time or money was not to be spared to make it a tremendous success in every possible way, that for weeks the corporation represented by Mr. Lasky, Mr. Niblo, Mr. Goodstadt, Miss Mathis and the affiant had frequent conferences regarding the selection of actors and actresses for the various parts in this production and before final selection for any important part was made, Valentino was consulted; that the corporation had great difficulty in finding a suitable type of woman to play the leading feminine role and at least a dozen names of leading artists were submitted for consideration and discussion and finally Miss Nita Naldi was chosen especially for this part and brought to Hollywood from New York to play this part and Valentino repeatedly told affiant she was an ideal type for the part and could not have been bettered.

Affiant further says that prior to the employment of Miss Mathis, as aforesaid she had interested herself in said Valentino and had told affiant that she was the one who had chosen Valentino to play Julio Desnoyers in "The Four Horsemen" and succeeded in getting him cast for that part against the opposition of Rex Ingram, the director, and the executive officers of the producing corporation, that upon exhibition of this picture to the public it proved to be the greatest picture of the year and her judgment in regard to Valentino was thus upheld; that she thereupon decided to take a professional interest in him and said Valentino, before and after the employment of Miss Mathis expressed the same admiration for her help and ability as she did for him and at various times said to affiant that much of his success on the screen was due to her very great artistic ability and her sympathetic assistance.

Affiant further says that many times in discussing various matters in connection with productions, Valentino would say to affiant or request affiant to discuss the matter further with Miss Mathis and told affiant that any decision reached by her would be acceptable to him and that affiant has many times discussed said matters with Miss Mathis and her decision have been

acceptable to said Valentino.

Affiant further says that he was present upon many occasions and conferences between Mr. Lasky and said Valentino when the negotiations for said contract of November 28, 1922 and January 17, 1922 were being carried on, and that affiant also had negotiations himself with said Valentino, that neither affiant or Mr. Lasky or any other representative of the corporation so far as known by affiant at any time made any representations or statements or held out any inducement to the said Valentino to enter into either of said contracts except the terms and conditions which were incorporated in said respective contracts, that neither affiant nor Mr. Lasky in affiant's presence nor any other representative of the corporation in affiant's presence at any time made any untrue statements or any misrepresentations with reference to any matter in any way connected with the negotiations for said agreements or to induce said Valentino to enter into same.

Affiant further says that at no time did said Valentino state to him or mention to him that there were any misstatements or misrepresentations fraudulent or otherwise in any matter connected with the negotiations of these contracts or the execution therefor prior to the 10th day of August, 1922. Affiant further says that the said contracts were freely entered into and executed by the said Valentino after a full discussion of all the terms therefor and Clifford Robertson, who was the agent and representative of said Valentino, in the negotiations of said agreements, and also that W. I. Gilbert, Esquire, who was at all times his attorney at represented him in the negotiations and in execution of said contracts.

Affiant further says that so far as known by him at no time has the corporation or any agent or representative thereof refused to discuss with said Valentino the story during any production or the direction therefor or the cast, and that any and all suggestions made by said Valentino have been fully considered and affiant further says that nearly all of the suggestions and requests with reference to such matters made by said Valentino have been accepted and granted.

Affiant further says that there was never at any time to his knowledge

any conduct on the part of affiant or of any other representative of the corporation which in any way rendered it difficult or at all interfered with the production work of said Valentino, but on the contrary affiant and every other person in the employ of the corporation connected with the productions of said plays had affiant's instructions to take the same care as with other stars to assist and help said Valentino in his work in every possible manner in order to enable him to play his part with the artistic ability of which he was capable and affiant further states that he notified all departments in any way connected with the studio to treat Valentino with the same respect and courtesy that all other stars are accorded.

Affiant further says that never at any time during the life of Valentino's contracts with the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation did affiant or any representative of the corporation with the knowledge of affiant, interfere with his personal affairs except at the request of said Valentino who on several occasions came in and asked affiant for the benefit of his advice on personal matters which advice was given him because of friendship on the part of affiant and not because of affiant's official position.

Affiant further says that at no particular time during said Valentino's employment did he mention to affiant any specific case in which the corporation or its representatives were interfering with his personal affairs or say that he had been compelled to sign a contract, that at all times from the time Valentino first appeared with the corporation in "The Sheik" to the time that affiant left for the Orient he told affiant he was happy and contented with his support in the way of stories that the corporation gave him and which affiant says the corporation gives to every other actor of equal importance and also said that it was his personal affairs only that interfered with his work and his happiness; that Valentino consulted with affiant frequently in the matter of his divorce, with his wife on him by her attorney for payment of alimony and other moneys and told affiant he had made up his mind no matter where he might get as a star in the motion picture profession he would rather stop work here and go to Europe and give up his career in the United States than to allow his wife to get a cent of the money

he thought she was not entitled to.[sic]

Affiant further says that during the whole of said Valentino's employment with Famous Players-Lasky Corporation affiant showed Valentino the greatest respect and courtesy and that Valentino confided to affiant many of his most personal affairs; that affiant reciprocated this friendly feeling.

Affiant further says that all contracts, including Valentino's executed by Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, provides that all stars, actors and actresses to be bound by and obedient to the rules of the company, that one of the rules in force restricted the admission of visitors into the studio especially where it would tend to hold up a picture still in production; that the rule was made for the reason among others that stars frequently insisted upon the admission of their friends for the purpose of receiving and visiting with them, thus delaying the director and costing the corporation large sums of money in consequence. That this rule was uniformly applied to all employees of the corporation. Affiant says that up to his departure for the orient he had been more than liberal with the requests of said Valentino for permission to bring his friends and acquaintances into the studio, but that on or about July 14, 1922, said Valentino was working on an important set in "The Young Rajah" when affiant refused a request from Valentino to admit three or four of his friends to the studio which request affiant refused and on July 15th received the following letter from Mr. Valentino:

"Following our controversy of yesterday, the 14th, I would appreciate it if you would be kind enough to state what privileges and perogatives I am supposed to have in the capacity of a Paramount star in regard to receiving people who may wish to see me on important business so that I may be able to conform myself to the rules of this organization."

In answer to Valentino's letter affiant replied by letter on the same day as follows:

"Replying to your letter regarding your perogatives as a star, if you will drop in during your spare time I will be glad to discuss this matter with you as I agree with you thoroughly that you ought to know exactly what to do in situations of this kind."

To which letter affiant received no reply either in person or otherwise.

Affiant further says that in all cases he has endeavored to secure the properties, costumes and other things Valentino wanted and was excepted in the following cases which affiant now recalls and in which Valentino's contention was right and affiant agreed with him; in one case was a horse and saddle in his production of "The Young Rajah"; the various departments had tried to get what they thought was satisfactory to Valentino but on the arrival at the location Mr. Valentino objected most strenuously to the horse, and affiant after hearing his statement told Valentino his contention was right and affiant immediately gave orders to secure a horse suitable to the part Valentino was portraying, that Valentino secured a horse from a friend of his and used the saddle that was prepared for the first horse, that Valentino came back from location that night perfectly satisfied and contented and told affiant so. The other occasion was in the production of "The Young Rajah" where Valentino appeared in a chariot, his contention in regard to this was that it was not built right; that on inspecting the same affiant agreed with him and took the matter over with Miss Mathis and immediately gave orders to reconstruct this chariot so that it would conform to the ideas expressed by Valentino.

Affiant does not recall any other specific instances of complaints or objections by Mr. Valentino except trivial everyday occurrences, more or less prevalent in all production work.

Affiant further says that Valentino had some time previous to his employment by Famous Players-Lasky Corporation in the production of "The Sheik" had been working for the Universal Film Manufacturing Company at a salary of \$150.00 a week and subsequently worked for Metro Corporation in the production of the "Four Horsemen" at a salary of \$350.00 per week and later for the same corporation worked in the production of "Camille" at a salary of \$400.00 per week and that as affiant is informed and believes up to the time of employment by Famous Players-Lasky for the production of "The Sheik" he had not received a salary in excess of \$500.00 per week.

Affiant further says that under Mr. Lasky's orders to spare no expense

on "Blood and Sand" he secured the best talent available in every department, affiant as representative of the corporation secured from the Cecil B. De Mille productions, Alvin Wyckoff who had the reputation of being one of the best cameramen in the motion picture industry and who for several years had been engaged by Cecil B. De Mille for photographing his productions, and that it was only after several conferences with the said Cecil B. De Mille that the corporation secured his consent to this arrangement, the understanding with Mr. De Mille at this time being that if his next picture started before production was through with "Blood and Sand" he would have to have Alvin Wyckoff back to work with him. That several times previous to affiant's departure for the Orient, Valentino mentioned to affiant that the photography of this production was as good as any he had ever seen.

Charles Eyton.

Back issues of Taylorology are available on the Web at any of the following:

<http://www.angelfire.com/az/Taylorology/>

<http://www.etext.org/Zines/ASCII/Taylorology/>

<http://www.silent-movies.com/Taylorology/>

Full text searches of back issues can be done at <http://www.etext.org/Zines/>
or at <http://www.silent-movies.com/search.html>. For more information about Taylor, see

WILLIAM DESMOND TAYLOR: A DOSSIER (Scarecrow Press, 1991)

* T A Y L O R O L O G Y *
* A Continuing Exploration of the Life and Death of William Desmond Taylor *
* *
* Issue 83 -- November 1999 Editor: Bruce Long *
* TAYLOROLOGY may be freely distributed *

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What is TAYLOROLOGY?

TAYLOROLOGY is a newsletter focusing on the life and death of William Desmond Taylor, a top Paramount film director in early Hollywood who was shot to death on February 1, 1922. His unsolved murder was one of Hollywood's major scandals. This newsletter will deal with: (a) The facts of Taylor's life; (b) The facts and rumors of Taylor's murder; (c) The impact of the Taylor murder on Hollywood and the nation; (d) Taylor's associates and the Hollywood silent film industry in which Taylor worked. Primary emphasis will be given toward reprinting, referencing and analyzing source material, and sifting it for accuracy.

Well-known author Charles Higham is currently writing a book on the Taylor case, and will be featured discussing the case on upcoming interviews on The History Channel and A&E Cable.

The lyrics to Stevie Nicks' song, "Mabel Normand," are on the web at
[http://members.aol.com/KITENZ/lyrics.html#Mabel Normand](http://members.aol.com/KITENZ/lyrics.html#Mabel%20Normand)

A class at Georgia Tech on multimedia "Advanced Design and Production" has their Fall 1999 semester class project on the Taylor case. For details see
<http://pbl.cc.gatech.edu:8080/lcc6114.1>

"Suzanna" on Home Video

In the weeks before and months after the Taylor murder, Mabel Normand was working on the silent film "Suzanna", a film which evidently does not survive in complete form. "The Unseen Silents" is a video recently released by Unknown Video (unkvid@earthlink.net), containing the four surviving reels of "Suzanna", plus surviving footage from "Riddle Gawne", starring William S. Hart with Lon Chaney, and a rare Harold Lloyd short. One of the supporting actors in "Suzanna" is Carl Stockdale, who was Charlotte Shelby's alibi witness in the Taylor case, and who was himself suspected of being Taylor's killer (see TAYLORLOGY 22). Production on the film was suspended for several weeks after Taylor's murder, until Mabel Normand had recovered from the shock of Taylor's death and filming could resume. So as a record of two people involved in the case, filmed before and after the murder, "Suzanna" is the closest thing to newsreel footage available. The film's cameraman, Homer Scott, was also the cameraman for William Desmond Taylor from 1914 to 1917, having filmed about 20 movies directed by Taylor. And Walter McGrail, the leading man in "Suzanna," was also the leading man in "The Top of New York," Taylor's last-released film. "Suzanna" is not a slapstick film; the humor in the film is centered effectively on Mabel Normand's appealing personality.

Mack Sennett

Because of his romantic and professional relationship with Mabel Normand, film producer Mack Sennett was drawn into the aftermath of the Taylor murder. The following are a few interviews with Sennett made

throughout the silent film era.

* * * * *

August 15, 1914

MOVING PICTURE WORLD

Mack Sennett Talks of His Work

For the first time in a couple of years Mack Sennett last week had a good look at the skyline of New York City from the heights of Fort Lee. The last time the Keystone producer had stood on the hill was in the days when he was making the initial pictures of the brand that has made its trail around and over the world and laughed itself into the hearts of practically all picturegoers. Mr. Sennett had gone to Fort Lee as a member of the party of a score of film men who were looking over the fine plant of the Willat Studios. It just happened that in piling into autos in Times Square it fell to the writer to be the partner of the soft-spoken comedian. Mr. Sennett said he expected to be in New York about ten days. Together with Thomas H. Ince he had made the trip to the Atlantic Coast for the purpose of taking up business matters with the officers of the New York Motion Picture Company.

The chief bit of information divulged by Mr. Sennett, news of immediate importance to picture followers, is that he brought east with him a six-reel comedy--one on which he had, with all the members of the Keystone Company, put in fourteen weeks. The comedian said the production contained all that he had in himself. "I have put into it all that I have got," he said with emphasis. "I want to show it before I return to the Coast, and I guess it will be arranged. We have spared no necessary expense. As an illustration of this, we wanted a real snow scene. A company was sent up into the mountains, twelve or fourteen thousand feet above sea level. The party camped out in the snow and was gone a week. Some fine stuff was obtained, but we used just one hundred feet. That was what we wanted."

A week's trip for a hundred feet of film--a hundred seconds on the

screen--seems like a record for a dramatic production. Mr. Sennett would not say that the six reels were all comedy--"there's a little of everything," he said. Asked as to who had written the scenario, he intimated there was none. "I framed the story as I went along," he said. "I find this method has merits. It gives an elasticity to the plot; we are enabled to take advantage of unforeseen situations and to make the most of them. You know, personally, I never use a script. While I plan most of the pictures I produce myself, I do not 'write' them. I do supervise the work of other Keystone directors. Usually we assemble the company and rehearse the story. The entire action is gone over, and to a stenographer I outline details--minor as well as major ones. When we get through there is in hand a real script."

The conversation turned to the subject of engaging players, on which it developed that Mr. Sennett had decided opinions. "I don't believe in luring players from other manufacturers," said the comedian. "When I want an actor I go as a rule to the stage. There's a vast number of stage people, a lot of them good, anxious to get into picture work. I will not employ an actor that is under engagement. If a picture player out of work comes to me looking for employment, that is another question. He is tried out until we are satisfied that he can bring to us the material for which we are searching. Not until we are satisfied is he placed in stock."...

Mr. Sennett has been in the picture business about seven years. As will be remembered, his first work was with the Biograph, and with that company he remained five years. Before that he was for seven or eight years on the stage. When the comedian was asked if he had in contemplation any changes in the product of the Keystone, he admitted that he had.

"We intend to try steadily to improve our productions and also from time to time to change the character of the work," he said. "We are nearing the stage where we want to advance the scope of our subjects--not that the public shows any indications of being tired of Keystone stuff, but we desire to anticipate the wishes of the public, to keep ahead of the times. We are considering entering a new field. It is, of course, in these days a difficult thing to do, but we prefer to be progressive now rather than have

these steps forced upon us later.

"In spite of the fact that we spend a great deal of money on our pictures, we intend to spend more. It is our view that to be stingy in making pictures is to pursue a policy that is penny wise and pound foolish. A poor way to make money is to try to save it out of the film. No, I do not think the European war will materially affect the sales of Keystone. In fact, it may increase rather than decrease them.

"You know our method of making pictures is different from that of many. We have no stated time for making a production. If three weeks are necessary to film a certain subject and we find on examining it that it will be stronger as a single reel than a multiple, we cut it down to the thousand feet. We believe the money well invested. We just say to ourselves that we will give the exhibitor a treat this week at our expense. So it is that a lot of our subjects run into high figures, but we feel by so doing we are making more friends for Keystone.

"It is no easy matter to get a job with our company. A player knows, though, that once he is in stock he is there to stay and I believe it improves his efficiency all around. He knows he has been tried out, and he feels secure."

The Keystone producer said he would be in New York probably until the end of the week--August 8.

* * * * *

May 1915
Harry C. Carr
PHOTOPLAY

Mack Sennett -- Laugh Tester

A big shaggy man with a splendid leonine head is sitting at a desk in an office, surrounded by stenographers, desk telephones, filing cabinets and all the rest of the junk that stands for business system. In rushes an agitated

moving picture director.

"Say," he demands, "Would it be funny if the policeman fell out of the window onto a cactus plant?"

"It would not," answers the shaggy man with finality.

Exit the moving picture director.

The great white chief of the Keystone Company has spoken.

There are men who can bite a tea leaf and tell you whether it came from a tea plant up on the far slopes of the Himalayas where the borders of the British are guarded by the Gourkas, or whether it was sealed in Ceylon. There are others who can taste whisky and tell when it ceased to be corn in the ear. Other experts can detect a bogus bill by the feel as it touches their fingers. Mack Sennett is the world's best laugh tester. He can bite into a joke and tell whether it is really funny or just a sort of bogus funny as accurately as the whisky taster can tell the year of distilling.

Sennett is one of the towering personalities of the moving picture world. There are ten producing companies in the Keystone and a herd of comedians. Sennett is literally all ten companies and most of the comedians. Every comedy of the enormous output of the Keystone has been both written and acted by Sennett before it leaves the factor.

His extraordinary methods can best be shown by chasing him through a picture.

We will assume that the scenario has been written by one of the "kept" scenario writers who work on salary for the company. Sennett says that about fifty outside scenarios are received every day and fifty returned.

"It is the rarest thing in the world to find a real idea in the mail," says Sennett. "If we find even the germ of an idea in any scenario, we buy it and ask the writer for more. But nearly all those sent to us are merely silly strings of crazy incidents. It is not possible to be really funny without being logical. You will notice in our wildest rough comedies that the story has probability and sequence. Take even that trained snake that pulled a man up a cliff in one of our comedies. If you had a trained snake, it would be a most practical and excellent way of rescuing yourself from a

precipice.

"Good comedies are so rare that even our hired scenario writers seldom turn out a perfect one.

"The way to write a good moving picture comedy is first to get your idea; you will find that either in sex or crime. Those two fields are the great feeding grounds of funny ideas.

"Having found your hub idea, you build out the spokes; those are the natural developments that your imagination will suggest. Then introduce your complications--that makes up the funny wheel.

"If I could find a writer who could do this with success--that is to say one I could trust to turn out two comedies a week in such shape that I could hand them out to the directors without going over them myself, he could name his own salary. I mean that literally. He could prepare his own salary vouchers. That is how rare good comedy writers are.

"We have tried famous humorists and I can say with feeling that their stuff is about the worst we get. Every writer to whom we talk about scenarios is very airy and off-hand about it. 'Oh yes,' he says, 'I get you. What you want is just a lot of action.' Which is just what we don't want. What we want is a real idea--a logical, compelling idea. We will add the action."

Having found something that looks to him like a funny idea, Sennett goes over to a corner of the big studio, where, chalked on the board floor are the locales he intends to use. Lakes into which comedians are going to fall--rooms--fire escapes, etc., all indicated on the floor. There, among the chalk marks, he and the comedians work out every comedy situation. Not only do they plan all the situations and the business, but Sennett acts out every scene and shows how he thinks nearly every actor should do his part.

No one but a man with stage technique at his finger tips and a mind sizzling with pep and ideas could do this. There are few picture directors with the necessary physical strength.

Sennett has big heavy shoulders and a frame like a sailor. His shaggy hair and quick strong gestures speak of enormous reserve power. He is so

full of pep that he acts out half a dozen comedies when he talks to you in his club.

His equipment has been thorough. He bumped the bumps in burlesque vaudeville, musical comedy, melodrama and all the rest of it.

"I never succeeded very well on the stage," he confesses. "I never could agree with the directors. It always seemed to me that they made mistakes in dragging in situations for the sake of getting a laugh. I thought their comedy was too forced. They didn't let us act naturally. I was glad to go into moving pictures for the sake of trying out my own ideas. They seemed to have justified my complaints against the directors under whom I worked. If you want to make people really laugh--laugh all over--you must convince them."

Well, we will return to the chalk marks on the stage.

Sennett is showing the actors how he thinks it ought to be done. He has shown them to such good effect that some of them have become famous in the process. One of the actors he is showing is a very pretty girl bubbling over with the fun of the thing they are doing; that is Mabel Normand.

"When Miss Normand first came to my company," said Sennett in his club the other night, "She got such a small salary that I can't think of any word short enough to tell about it. Now she gets the second or third highest salary paid in the picture business.

"Miss Normand is such a wonderful success even more on account of her head than her good looks. She is quick as a flash and just naturally funny. She is funny to talk to. She seems to think in sparks."

Sennett was asked if Miss Normand didn't have troubles like other people learning to act. "Worse," he said. "The trouble with her was inducing her to keep quiet. Like most girls with quick thoughts, she acted quickly. She moved so quickly that the audience couldn't get it. Deliberation and poise were the lessons she had to learn. It was a tough job getting her to slow down. After that, she took up the problem of getting what I call 'man comedy'--that is, the repressed stuff. Not just flying around but sitting still and showing the changing thoughts on one's face.

"A somewhat similar development was that of Roscoe Arbuckle of our company--our fat man. We got him in the beginning because he was the rare combination of fat and perfect athlete. Arbuckle is a wonderful athlete in spite of his weight. We got him on account of the falls he could make. Every week he has been developing. I can see the difference in every picture we turn out. He began as a rough 'faller' and he has become a finished artist. And he is still going."

Miss Normand and Arbuckle and all the rest of them were trained over there among the chalk marks on the floor. That chalked-off patch of flooring may be said to be the post graduate college of moving picture comedy.

Sennett says that the great problem at this stage of the comedy is to plan effects so they appear to have "just happened." Their highest efforts are put upon the accidents. The stubbing of a toe, the tomato that hits the wrong man, are planned with the utmost care. Some actors fail utterly because they can't help showing that they expect the accident that is to get the laugh. Every move of the Keystone policemen, who seem to dash around at wild random, is planned down to the finest detail.

While they are working out the stuff on the chalk marks, there is one busy citizen. This is Sennett's stenographer. He is the best acrobat in the Keystone organization; has to be. While Sennett dashes hither and yon around the chalk marks, the stenographer dashes around after him. Every word of the "chief's" directions are taken down in short hand.

Finally they have worked it out, down to the last detail among the chalk lakes and streets. The stenographer then transcribes his notes.

The next day, these notes and the necessary actors are turned over to a sub-director who turns the chalk lakes into real ones. The sub-director makes the stenographer's notes come true. He works out in film form the business that has been planned on the chalked stage.

So much territory is used in one of the Keystone comedies that it takes a week or so to work it out. By this singular method Sennett is able to direct the whole thing in miniature in a few hours.

By this method he personally directs the scenarios of all his ten or

twelve companies. In a short time Keystone intends adding ten or twelve more and Sennett will also direct these. His will be the mind behind every scenario.

It is of course impossible to anticipate on the chalked floor all the details that come up when the real work is done.

For this reason, as Sennett sits in his office, a constant stream of moving picture directors are dashing in upon him.

He will be talking scenarios with a writer when a director dashes in and "puts up to the chief" some intricate question of comedy effect. This the ancient ceremony called "Passing the buck."

Right off the reel, Sennett will be called upon to accept or reject some idea that will make or break an expensive production. These interruptions would just about drive the average man crazy.

But like many men of excessive vitality and perception. Sennett has trained the mind to switch on or off like a dynamo.

He says he has trained himself to switch from one thing to another without the slightest feeling of irritation.

"The secret of it," he says, "is in the doctrine of non-resistance. If you think to yourself 'I wish this fellow would not cut in on my work,' you are hopelessly lost. The salvation of your nerves is to surrender yourself to any one who wants your attention. The reason that people get on the average man's nerves is that he gets on his own nerves. I don't get on my own nerves. Impatience or irritability would kill all the pep in sensitive, high-strung people such as I have to do with."

In due course of time, the actors come back with a few bumps and a feeling of elation at work well done and the "makings" of a film. The next job is the projection room.

Sennett cuts all the film sent out by the Keystone. He is a hard cutter. Only about one-fourth of the film made ever sees a public screen. That is to say, for every four feet of film taken, one foot is used and three feet thrown away.

This stage is, after all, the supreme test of the director. It is at

this point that he has to show an almost uncanny instinct for gauging the public taste.

The "legitimate" stage director can correct his mistakes. The first performance of every farce comedy is an experiment. He tries the play the first night. Some of the funny situations "get over;" some don't. Those that do not are cut out or changed. The moving picture comedy director has no such safety valve. The only test he has for what will make the public laugh is his own intuitive sense. He puts on what he thinks is funny and it has to stand. He seldom has any very definite means of finding out just which parts the public liked and which parts failed of appeal.

Sennett's years on the stage, hearing audiences laugh, stand him well now.

Having seen Sennett the scenario maker, the actor and the film cutter, we take a look at Sennett the business man.

"I feel sorry for the men who are trying to break into the picture game," he said. "It is getting harder every year. To begin now at the beginning and come in competition with the directors who have learned through long and hard experience will be an ordeal to try any man's courage.

"The great difficulty of mastering the moving picture business is keeping up with the constant changes. These come with incredible rapidity. You can understand how rapid are these changes when I tell you that we couldn't possibly put over today the comedies we were producing with success six months ago. They made a big hit six months ago but are entirely out of style now.

"Rough horse play has suddenly vanished from moving picture comedy.

"The moving picture comedy now demands subtle effects. Let me cite you a typical scene.

"A man is sitting in a hotel parlor. At one end of the room is sitting his affinity with her escort; at his side sits his wife. He is trying to show devotion to his wife without letting the affinity know he is married and to beam upon the affinity without letting his wife suspect. He just sits there. The comedy consists of the changes on his face. That takes real art;

it also takes real scenarios; also takes real directing. This was the stuff at which Charlie Chaplin excelled.

"There is a lot of money to be made in pictures--fortunes. But it takes great judgment and a game spender. No one who stops to think about the cost can ever succeed. The cost is simply not to be taken into consideration.

"For instance there are four people on the payroll of the Keystone company who, just one year ago, were getting three dollars a day. Now they are each under contract at a salary of \$10,000 apiece. We consider them cheap at the price.

"The moving picture business is the business for a man who is up on his toes and thinking fast."

* * * * *

February 21, 1922

CHICAGO HERALD-EXAMINER

Sennett Here, Defends Mabel

William Desmond Taylor, Los Angeles motion picture director, was killed by "somebody with a grudge," Mack Sennett, producer and employer of Mabel Normand, said yesterday as he passed through Chicago on his way to New York.

When he reached Chicago from Los Angeles he had a prepared statement to issue but sought to evade being interviewed. Some throat trouble, he said, had "gotten the best" of him. Later, however, he discussed the Taylor case verbally.

"There are only two tenable theories," he said. Either Taylor was killed by Sands, his former valet, or by somebody who held an ancient grudge against him. Find Sands. He holds the key to the murder.

"Taylor was not killed by a woman, at least a woman in the movie profession. I knew Taylor well and I knew who his intimates were. Mabel Normand was not in love with him. Taylor was cultured, refined, genteel. He was beloved by all the young women in the movie profession who knew him.

"But love--it's out of the question. Taylor was not killed because of a love affair."

Mr. Sennett's formal statement follows.

"When I left Los Angeles the apprehension of the assassin of William Desmond Taylor was no nearer than at the beginning of the case. The whole industry is bent on clearing up the mystery. Personally, I volunteered financially to aid in the capture of the guilty person and I hope they get him and darn quick at that.

"I do not know of a single person in moving pictures in Los Angeles who has not done all that could be done to capture the assassin. People working in moving pictures respected Taylor and feel a personal and vengeful desire to see the person who killed him brought to justice. That is the spirit I have seen in Los Angeles.

"Mabel Normand's present depression is due to the normal and natural reaction of losing a very excellent, charming man friend, a friend whom I as her employer was delighted to have her make. Although I knew Taylor but slightly, I was glad for her to know so fine a gentleman and I thought him very fine society for her to keep.

"Miss Normand is known to all as a charming and sweet girl, whose chief fault, if she has one, is that she is generous to a high degree. Her gifts to charity, her loans and kindnesses are well known in Los Angeles. It is unfortunate that she should have been the last person to see Mr. Taylor alone.

"Yet she rushed into the work of trying to clear up the mystery with a characteristic spirit and frankness. All along she has thought more of apprehending the murderer than in shielding her own name from publicity.

"Her position is one that anyone friendly to Mr. Taylor might have had thrust upon them--unfortunate coincidence that she and her chauffeur should have been the last to see him.

"As her employer, I have a strong professional interest in her success and in having the public know the truth about her. I have no theory as to who the guilty party might be."

Traveling with Mr. Sennett to New York were Thomas Ince, movie producer, and Mrs. Ince.

* * * * *

February 20, 1922
CHICAGO AMERICAN

Find Sands, Says Producer

"Edward Sands, former valet of William D. Taylor, holds the solution of the mystery which now surrounds the murder of his former employer," said Mack Sennett, movie director and present employer of Mabel Normand, upon his arrival in Chicago today.

"All the facts--and don't mistake that word 'facts,' not 'theories'--point to the crime having been committed by a man. If Sands did not commit the crime he knows who did.

"There was no love tangle or triangle. All these stories of a star's revenge for unrequited love, dope parties, jealousy, etc., might make good movie plots and interesting reading, but they are dangerous to the solution of this crime, because they divert attention from the main path leading to the murderer which is supported by facts.

"I would be no more surprised if this building collapsed on me than I would be to learn that a woman did the deed. It is a ridiculous theory--one entirely unsupported by facts."...

* * * * *

February 22, 1922
NEW YORK AMERICAN

Sennett Not Here to Look for Sands

Mack Sennett, producer of the Mabel Normand moving pictures, arrived

here yesterday from Los Angeles. He is one of the prominent members of the Hollywood colony who have been questioned by the investigators into the murder on February 1 last of William Desmond Taylor, movie director.

Sennett made a vigorous defense of Miss Normand and of the morals of Hollywood. He denied a report that he had come East to try to find Edward F. Sands, former valet to Taylor, who is suspected by the Los Angeles police. He made this statement in an interview:

"A great injustice has been done Miss Normand. It was an unfortunate coincidence that she happened to be the last person, besides her chauffeur, known to have seen Taylor alive.

"She went to the bungalow to get a book. That has been established by the authorities. In the motion picture colony everybody is certain she knows nothing about how Taylor met his death. She is a hard worker and a conscientious artist.

"I know positively that at the present moment Miss Normand is doing everything she can to help the authorities solve the mystery.

"If I knew who killed Taylor I would seek the \$4,500 in rewards that have been offered. I would give the information, for that matter, without thought of the reward. All of us in Hollywood want to do all we can to solve the case.

"The people in our movie colony, men and women, are very hard workers. They work from early morning until late afternoon and often into the night. They have to look after their health. They have to preserve their personal appearances to be successful. Despite what has been printed to the contrary, there are certain ideals that they live up to. The majority of them live good lives, are domestic in their habits and are most charitable. Why single out the few and blame all?

"I knew Taylor only slightly. I am told he was a high-class type of man and was respected."

The producer, who arrived with Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Ince, is at the Hotel Ambassador.

* * * * *

November 10, 1924

Don Ryan

LOS ANGELES RECORD

Sennett Says It

On a visit to his studio the other day I asked Mack Sennett what constitutes the art of the movies.

"Why," he replied, without any hesitation, "you've gotta slap 'em down good."

Mr. Sennett is one who brings to contemplation of his art none of the factitious ideals inspired in our serious critics by reading the essays of Cecil DeMille's press agent in the daily journals. And slapstick comedy as produced by Mr. Sennett is the only art worthy of the name that has emerged from the movies to date.

Slapstick is real genre. The wistful irony of Chaplin's creation: a small, oppressed individual, becoming more ridiculous as he tries to maintain his dignity amidst overwhelming catastrophe; and, under the same circumstances, the cheeky Americanism of a Harold Lloyd, the immovable gravity of a Buster Keaton, the childish absurdity of a Ben Turpin--these qualities are art. Or at least they go to make up something that is an art, because it is a perfect accomplishment in its own peculiar medium.

"These highbrow movies," Mr. Sennett told me, "are uncertain. But with a comedy there's just one test. Did they laugh? If they did--it's art."

Thanks to the demiurge who presides over the future of art in America, Mr. Sennett has abandoned the stupid melodramas which disgraced his only incursion into the serious movies, and has gone back to the two-reel slapstick comedies that made him famous. He has gone back--with restrictions. The idea of romance still sticks in his head. His method now is to contrast the idyllic with the grotesque; the pastoral with the violent; the sentimental with a burlesque counterpart of itself.

Such perhaps is the natural arc of the ascending medium. Nothing stands still, certainly not the movies. I suppose we cannot justly have expected slapstick to fix itself sempiternally in that mold given form by the delightful antics of the Keystone cops. The Keystone cops are no more. As Mr. Sennett explained:

"Well, the real cops began to get pretty sore. Said why did we kid law and order all the time. Somebody even accused us of being Bolsheviks. That wouldn't do. Besides, we began to get new ideas. Other things came along--new gags--new characters. The comedies keep changing like everything else, but the principle remains the same. You've gotta slap 'em down good!"

If there is anything in the movies about which I could grow sentimental it would be the old Sennett lot. The Sennett studio at 1712 Glendale Boulevard--in what has become a half-residence, half-factory region--is the oldest studio still operating in Los Angeles. Through the years it has been built up by additions of rooms, sheds, stages, wings, ells, towers, stories and super-structures, until it has become the modern counterpart of a medieval castle.

The flavor of the Sennett studio is its charming vulgarity. Nobody pretends to be anything except himself. The Sennett studio is the only one in existence that maintains a tradition, the stronger because it is unconscious. It is like the great workshop of some craftsman of the renaissance, wherein his apprentices carry on--work, eat, dally, and enjoy life--under the beneficent eye of the master. A Rabelaisian mood prevails--cordial, gustful, warming the heart as with a flavor of good wine and mutton roasting on spits before the open hearth.

In the upper story of the castle keep, overlooking the entrance, is the master's quarters. The office reminds one of the interior of a private Pullman: long, narrow, paneled in cheery wood in the manner of Pullman cars, and equipped with bright brass cuspidors.

Here I was received by Mr. Sennett with a handclasp that made me dance. A bulking, square figure, deep-chested, red-faced, dark hair beginning to gray, strong jaws enjoying a chew of scrap tobacco. An Irish policeman--if

ever one stepped out of a uniform. But this genius who would have made an excellent policeman, then an alderman, then a mayor, chose rather to be a comedian, then a director, then a producer. Fame and fortune lay in either course, but for the sake of art let us rejoice that Mr. Sennett stayed out of politics.

I asked him about the early days of the comedies. He related how the Biograph chiefs looked with fear and disfavor on his first efforts at slapstick.

"Why," he chortled, "I was slated to be canned at the finish of every picture. They used to say, 'Can't you be funny without being so rough?'

"'No,' I'd tell 'em, 'I can't. You've gotta get the laughs, haven't you. Well, what do you want me to do, have the girl stick her toe in the brook and make moon eyes at the boy across the way? Bah! It won't work. You've gotta slap 'em down good!'

"When these comedies were shown in England they seemed to catch on. Funny, it was the English audiences that saved my job. I'd have been fired if the slapstick stuff hadn't started to make money across the pond right away."

Mr. Sennett organized the Keystone Comedy company in New York. Then came Chaplin.

"Fred Mace was going to quit me," said Mr. Sennett. "He'd been offered more dough than I could pay. I tried to coax him to stick, but there was nothing doing. Then I remembered a little Englishman I'd seen one night at Morris' three-a-day on the American roof. I hired Chaplin.

"He didn't have that make-up he uses now. That was assembled in the costume department on this lot. The same room you can see down there."

The Keystone company had moved to California seeking sunshine.

"Chaplin tried out several different make-ups. The first he used was a drunk--man in evening clothes, about fifty years old, with a red nose. The first make-ups didn't go very well. We kept on experimenting. In the early days we comedians used to put on new make-ups and run around the stage to see if we could get a laugh from the rest of the gang. We were just like a lot

of kids. Used to bring out mattresses and practice falls. Say, did you every try to fall straight back and keep your hands at your sides? Pure relaxation. That's the secret of the acting profession. It goes for tragedy just the same as for comedy, too."

I recalled how all the funniest comedians practiced this maxim of their preceptor; how, in the midst of the most exciting circumstances they always wear that ridiculous air of relaxation, of complete detachment, and how much funnier it makes them.

"There is more of a story in the comedy we make now," Mr. Sennett summed up. "Instead of putting in gags just to get laughs, we let the gags grow out of the plot. The situation suggests the business. But the principle remains the same," he concluded genially. "It's what I told 'em in the beginning and it's what I tell you now. You can talk about the art of the movies and all that, but the one thing to remember, and believe me, it's mighty important, and that is:

"You've gotta slap 'em down good!"

* * * * *

August 1928

Theodore Dreiser

PHOTOPLAY

The Best Motion Picture Interview Ever Written

The Great American Master of Tragedy Brilliantly Interviews
the Great American Master of Comedy

My admiration for Mack Sennett is temperamental and chronic. I think it dates from that long ago when he played the moony, semi-conscious farm hand, forsaken by the sweetly pretty little milkmaid for some burlesque city slicker, with oiled hair and a bushy mustache. And it endures today when he is a multi-millionaire, the owner of a moving picture studio with some twenty-

two or twenty-four stages, and an established reputation as the producer of comedy of a burlesque type. For to me his is a real creative force in the cinema world--a master at interpreting the crude primary impulses of the dub, the numbskull, the weakling, failure, clown, boor, coward, bully. The interpretive burlesque he achieves is no different from that of Shakespeare, Voltaire, Shaw or Dickens, when they are out to achieve humorous effects by burlesquing humanity. To be sure, these others move away from burlesque to greater ends. It is merely an incident in a great canvas. With Sennett it is quite the whole canvas. But within his range, what a master! He is Rabelaisian, he is Voltairish. He has characteristics in common with Sterne, Swift, Shaw, Dickens--where they seek to catch the very thing which he catches. Positively, if any writer of this age had brought together in literary form--and in readable English--instead of upon the screen as has Sennett--the pie-throwers, soup-spillers, bomb-tossers, hot-stove-stealers, and what not else of Mr. Sennett's grotesqueries--what a reputation! The respect! The acclaim! As it is, there exists today among the most knowing of those who seek a picture of life as it is--or might be were it not for these inherent human buffooneries which Mr. Sennett so clearly recognizes and captures--a happy and sane tendency to evaluate him properly.

And so, for the past fifteen or eighteen years--whenever and wherever I have seen the name of Mack Sennett posted above a movie, I have been tempted and all too frequently possibly have succumbed to an incurable desire to witness his latest antic waggeries. The bridges, fences, floors, sidewalks, walls, that give way under the most unbelievable and impossible circumstances. The shirt-collars that, too tightly drawn, in attempts to button them, take flight like birds--the shacks (like the one in Chaplin's "Gold Rush") which spin before the wind, only to pause, with a form of comic terror for all, at the edge of a precipice, there to teeter and torture all within--trains or street cars or automobiles that collide with trucks and by sheer impact transfer whole groups of passengers to new routes and new directions! Positively, as I have often told myself at such times and countless others, are not these nonsensicalities but variations of that age-

old formula that underlies all humor--the inordinate inflation of fancy to heights where reason can only laughingly follow; the filliping of the normal fancy with the abnormal? I think so. And Mr. Sennett has been for these past twenty years or more--and still remains--the master of that.

Thus when the opportunity came to interview him I seized upon it with avidity. And in the Ambassador Hotel in New York, after many cautious preliminaries on the part of a representative, there he stood in perhaps his workaday, official mood. It was arranged that I was to meet him for luncheon and so he came--a somewhat stocky and yet well-knit, gray person, with a touch of the careless in his appearance and an eye gray and soft, yet suggesting a forceful, searching intellect behind it and one that might on occasion have a granitic quality; yet with a sagging, half-lackadaisical manner, which, none-the-less, as one might well know, could be a manner only. And guarded by a business manager--shrewd, pleasant, friendly sort of person, watchful of his employer's interests on this occasion, yet helpful to both of us in a genial way. This is the individual, as I understood it afterward, who writes most of those startling captions that help to edge the whirligig humor of Sennett's productions.

"Just a canceled stamp in the post-office of life."

"--and as hungry as a sparrow at a Scotch picnic."

"--so stupid he thought pickled herring ought to be reported to the dry squad."

"He believed that woman's place was in the home and not in the English channel."

"Call for my laundry at my apartment--it's just a little step-in."

"--and so dumb she thought a meadow lark was a picnic."

"--and so stupid he thought an oyster bed was where fish slept."

Boldly and courageously I started the ball rolling by asking: "Just what excuse have you to offer, Mr. Sennett, for one more of your comedies?"

And then, to my real amusement and astonishment, I saw a faint flush steal over his face--the face of the, to me, greatest creator of joyful burlesque the world has ever known. Instantly I was moved to abandon the

pose back of the question, but was forestalled by the Irish adequateness to resist any blow, which is his to a terrifying degree.

"Well, now, that reminds me of a row I once saw in one of the streets up here in Harlem. Two men were fighting. An Irish policeman came up to stop it, but couldn't get the hang of it by watching. So finally he grabbed the nearest one by the neck and shook him until he was dizzy. Then, as soon as he let him go, he said: 'Now what's all this about?' And that's how I feel now."

"But there's still the question," I persisted teasingly.

"Well, you can't tell," he said. "It may be that I think that stuff's funny."

"Acquitted on the grounds of delusion," I said. "But there's still something worse. You're here to give a complete reason for your being--the artistic faith that is in you. You're to tell me what you think the intrinsic nature of comedy is--why, for instance, you prefer it to drama or melodrama--and--"

"We made a melodrama once," he interrupted, smiling, "or started to. I don't know whether I ought to confess that, though," he added, a boyish and naive smile playing over his face.

"And what happened to it?"

"Well, I don't know exactly," he went on, an infectious chuckle emanating from his throat. "We kind of got lost. We had a plot, we thought, but when we got it worked out, people laughed when we thought they ought to cry or shiver."

"Yes, that might have been a little disconcerting," I agreed.

"It was," he said--and in that same, dry, dubious tone that characterizes so much of his best manner. "We tried to fix it up, make it more sad or something. But we had to turn in into a comedy."

"What a tragedy!" I ventured.

"Yes, sir, a comic tragedy--that's what came of it at last, I think. I scarcely remember what happened to it."

But anyone taking Mack Sennett's genial, easy manner for anything but a

front or mask behind which lurks a terrifying wisdom and executive ability would be most easily deceived. For, looking at him as he sat there--the bulk and girth of him--I could see the constructive energy and will, the absolute instinct and force, which has led and permitted him to do so ably all that he has done. It was interesting just to feel the force and the intelligence of him, his willingness and determination to give a satisfactory account of himself--his mental, if not emotional, satisfaction with himself--his dry, convincing sanity that assures him to this hour--and rightly so, I think--that his view is as good as any other.

I had read an article by one writer who said, quoting Sennett: "You have to put in some rough stuff if you want to make them laugh. Only exaggeration up to the nth power gets the real shout." And another quoting this same Sennett said: "You have to spill soup on dignity to get a real burlesque laugh." And I agree, whether Sennett said these things or not. In the world of the commonplace, only the extraordinary, the unbelievable almost, is truly amusing or interesting.

But let that be as it will. Here was Mr. Sennett, and most agreeably, seeking to interpret himself. So I said, after a time:

"When you first started out years ago--but exactly when was that, if you don't mind?"

"Oh, back in 1908 with the Old Biograph."

"And how did you come to get into that work, if it isn't too much trouble to you?"

"Well, I was a flop in musical comedy--used to sing pretty well, but I never could get the fancy stepping of the chorus man. So I went to work in the Biograph pictures. They didn't make comedies then, just sentimental romances and very meller melodramas and tragedies--what tragedies! These were awfully funny to me; I couldn't take them seriously. I often thought how easy it would be, with the least bit more exaggeration--and they were exaggerated plenty as it was--to turn those old dramas into pure farce.

"I couldn't get the comedy idea out of my head and finally persuaded two other fellows to go into partnership with me on producing comedies. We

didn't have any money, but at the time this didn't impress us as being important."

"And so, the Keystone Comedy Company came into being, didn't it?"

"Yes. We hired a camera man and started out. That camera man--he was the most impressive-looking camera man in the world. He looked like a Russian grand duke and had the lofty manners of an Oriental prince. We didn't stop to inquire whether he knew anything about cameras; we hired him on the strength of his grand ducal whiskers."

"And how about your first studio?"

"We didn't have any studio. We just carried the cameras and props on our shoulders and started off somewhere on a street car. Usually we hung around near Fort George."

"My God," I exclaimed sadly, "of all places."

"Yes," went on Sennett solemnly, "and we had so little money that we had to make three comedies before we had the film of the first one developed; we could get it done cheaper that way, you see. And I remember how proudly we went into the projecting room to see our maiden effort; and how we came out staggering with dismay. The grand ducal camera man hadn't turned the crank fast enough, and consequently the picture didn't move--it leaped in wild and fantastic kangaroo bounds!"

"Like some of your best comedians since?"

"Yes, like some of my best ones since. But to go on. There was nothing to do but throw the stuff away and start all over again. By this time we were flat broke. We made a pool of all our watches and stickpins and got together enough money to go to California. I brought two actors West with me, the two business partners remained in New York.

"When we arrived in Los Angeles, I wandered out to an unfrequented part of town where the families kept goats in their back yards. I rented a vacant lot and had a little shanty put up. This was my first studio and the little shack is still standing there in the middle of our twenty-two acres of studios in Edendale. I guess I'll never tear that shanty down.

"It took a lot of physical endurance to get through the work I undertook

in those days," he went on reminiscently. "Every morning when the bricklayers were going to work I went out to the 'studio' and got the props ready for the day's work. We made new sets by pasting some wall paper over the old ones.

"All day I acted in my pictures myself and directed, too. At night when the other actors had gone home, I stuck around late cutting the film shot the previous day. I was telephone operator, bookkeeper, actor, director, publicity man and film cutter. It was a job.

"Finally I shipped the first comedy to my partners in the East. Their verdict was prompt. 'Terrible,' they wired me. I took a cinch in my belt and started another comedy, which was eventually shipped. The answer was just as prompt: 'Worse.'

"I wonder now that I didn't lose heart entirely, especially with money by this time being as scarce as hen's teeth. Then I got a 'break,' as we now call it. It happened that the G. A. R. was holding a convention in Los Angeles and there was a great parade. As a last desperate chance I photographed this parade; took some comic scenes to fill in and made a war comedy. This time the message that came back from New York was: 'Great.'

"It was easy from then on."

And it was pleasing to see him sit and cogitate in a pleasant April manner in regard to his own past. And none of the hardened granite that one suspects in his nature from time to time showing in his words or eyes. Instead, nothing but Rabelaisian gaiety and vitality.

"But to return to my first question--your artistic excuse for being--the animating faith that is in you?" I said, after he had finished all this.

He stared unblinkingly, the blue-grey of his Irish eyes fronting me like two milky, unrevealing crystals.

"My artistic reason for being! The faith that is in me! I guess I never thought of those things when I started out, but I can give a fair answer now, I think. Everyone wants to laugh at something. Mostly at other people's troubles, if they're not too rough."

"But you never thought of that when you started, you say?"

"Oh, I must have--as a comedy idea--but not as a philosophy," was his prompt reply.

"And you still adhere to it?"

"Something uncomfortable happening to the other fellow, but not too uncomfortable? Yes. Things must go wrong, but not too wrong. And to some fellow that you feel reasonably sure can't be too much injured by it--just enough to make you laugh--not enough to make you feel sad or cry. And always in some kind of a story that could be told very differently if one wanted to be serious, but that you don't want to be serious about, see?"

"I see. But years ago, when you started, the type of comedy you produced was decidedly crude, wasn't it? I recall the hot stoves on which people fell, the hot soup that steamed down their backs, the vats of plaster, or tar, or soap, that they fell into; the furniture, walls, ceilings, even houses, that fell on them; the horses, wagons, trains that ran over them. Any change in that respect?"

"Well, no. I don't know that there is any actual change in the kind of burlesque that makes people laugh, although there is some, I guess, in the way it's presented. For instance, ten or fifteen or twenty years ago, a man might sit on a hot stove longer than he would today and without the audience stopping laughing. Or, maybe, trains could hit him and all in the same picture. Fifteen years ago the settings could be cruder than they are today, and a waiter in shirt sleeves and no collar could spill soup down the shirt front of a laborer and get a laugh, and that in some ordinary one-armed place not very nice to look at today. Today an American comedy audience seems to want better surroundings or settings. And if the waiter is of the Ritz or Ambassador type, the customer a gentleman in evening clothes--or a lord--so much the better! But the spilling of the soup remains the same. It has to be sort of rough trouble for the other fellow in burlesque, or no laugh."

And here Mr. Sennett interpolated a bit of reminiscence out of his old Biograph days. It appears that when he first began to make comedies in opposition to the melodramas of the hour, the Biograph chiefs looked on them with doubt and disfavor. "'They're too rough,' they said. 'Too many people

fall downstairs or out of windows, or get shot or run over. Can't you be funny without being so rough?' 'No,' I told them, 'I can't. You've got to get the laughs, haven't you?' And then I'd show them that you couldn't reach the crowd by refined comedy. If you wanted the big crowds and the big laughs, you had to have the stuff a little rough. And, as I say, except for dressing the actors and the scenes a little better today, there isn't so much change."

One of the things I was moved to ask at this point was, slapstick being what it is, was there any limit to the forms or manifestations of this humor? And to my surprise, yes, there was an is.

"No joke about a mother ever gets a laugh," he insisted most dogmatically. "We've tried that, and we know. You can't joke about a mother in even the lightest, mildest way. If you do, the audience sits there cold, and you get no hand. It may not be angry--we wouldn't put in stuff about a mother that an audience could take offense at--but, on the other hand, it is not moved to laugh--doesn't want to--and no laughs, no money. So mothers in that sense are out. You have to use them for sentiment or atmosphere in burlesque."

"In other words, hats off to the American mother," I said, thinking of that sterling epitome of America--"Processional." "But not so with fathers," I added, after a time.

"Oh, fathers," he said dryly. "No. You can do anything you want to with them. Father's one of the best butts we have. You can do anything but kill him on the stage."

"And as for the dear mother-in-law," I interjected.

"Better yet. Best of all, unless it is an old maid."

"No quarter for old maids, eh?"

"Not a cent. A free field and no favors where they're concerned. You can do anything this side of torture and get a laugh."

In silence I began to brood over the human or inhuman psychology of that, but got nowhere for want of time. After all, Mr. Sennett was being interviewed, and I had to go on.

"Tell me one thing," I asked. "You used to act most amusingly. Do you ever act nowadays in your comedies?"

"No."

"Any reason?"

"Well, acting isn't my business any more. You can't direct the activities of a big motion picture studio and wear grease paint at the same time. Oh, once in a while I got out on stage and show someone how to work out a bit of business, but never anything more than that. Most of my time is spent on the stories and gags."

At this point Mr. Sennett's manager contributed the information that the rest of his employer's time was spent supervising the direction, editing and titling of the comedies that bear his name.

"But years ago, as I understand it, you wrote nearly all your own slapstick. Is that right?"

"Well, pretty nearly, at first."

"But not any more?"

"Not so much. Oh, once in a while I get an idea or so--the same as anyone else--and, when I do, I call a stenographer and dictate it roughly. We have a lot of stages out there to keep going. But I don't know that I can say that anybody writes 'em. We have a board of scenario writers now--twelve or fifteen all the time--and they all work together more or less.

"Whenever anyone has a real idea in the rough, it goes before that board, and they thrash it out among themselves. Of course, everyone sits in on that--myself and everyone else who wants to. Everyone is absolutely free to say what he thinks is wrong and without prejudice on anybody's part. In fact, everybody is encouraged to do that. But once in a while, even when one of us gets a plot we think is all right to start with, we can't make it work. No one can, at times. We have had plots on which we all worked, for a week or ten days, without being able to solve some problem which, if we didn't solve it, ruined the whole thing. And then, finally, we had to give it up because it just couldn't be solved.

"Some of these things are more difficult than you think, and sometimes

we even get superstitious about them and change the spot on which we are trying to work so as to change our luck. In fact, it's come to this--that we have spots, or rooms, or places, which we consider lucky or unlucky. I remember one time, we had one of these tough problems and we had moved around from one place to another on the lot for days, trying to work it out. And finally I bundled the whole crowd in a car and took 'em away from the lot entirely and out to a new place on a hill, or rather a mountain top, in Griffith Park. We had our lunch and our cigars, but we no sooner got out and settled than one fellow jumped up, smacked his hands together and said: 'It's a letter.' What he meant was that the problem could be solved with a letter. For weeks after that we went out on that hill in the hope of getting results in other cases, but we finally gave it up because it was kind of far and the results didn't always warrant trips."

And now I recalled that Mr. Sennett has always been very much interested in personality--that fascinating something which makes celebrities out of unknowns. The list of the subsequently-to-be-famous stars from Chaplin to Langdon, who, unheralded and unknown, were first fostered and trained by him, is long. And so I said:

"You have detected and trained a number of film geniuses. How do you define that 'something' that sets a certain-to-be-star apart from those who do not happen to possess it?"

"I wouldn't know how to define it exactly," he replied.

"Then there's no one characteristic that is common to all beginners who finally reach a high place and great fame?"

"Well, maybe one, yes," he returned, after pausing and drumming on the table, "though some people who don't become stars have that, too."

"And that is?"

"A tireless desire to work."

"Is that all?"

"No, not all. There's something else. An intense interest in their own future or success. They all have that--if they get over."

"Anything else?"

"Well, I'll tell you. They have a phrase in pictures now which everybody uses when they want to describe the thing you're talking about--the something that makes a star, as opposed, say, to the absence of it in someone who can never hope to be one. They say, 'He's got It,' or 'She's got It.' And the way they emphasize the word "It" tells you what they mean. But if you tried to make them say what they mean by It, they couldn't tell you. And I couldn't either, because the style or expression of that It is so different in different people. Take Douglas Fairbanks now. His It, as I see it, is a wonderful athletic skill and that laughing, defiant smile he has, together with the power to strike an effective and interesting pose. On the other hand, Chaplin has a nervous, frightened look when he wants to use it and the gift of making you feel that he is trying to get away with something that he shouldn't and yet making you sympathize with him. Then Harry Langdon, who I consider the greatest of them all."

"Greater than Chaplin?" I interpolated.

"Yes, greater than Chaplin," he replied. "Well, Langdon suggests a kind of baby weakness that causes everybody to feel sorry for him and want to help him out. He's terribly funny to me. On the other hand, Langdon knows less about stories and motion picture technique than perhaps any other screen star. If he isn't a big success on the screen, it will not be because he isn't funny, but because he doesn't understand the many sides to picture production. He wants to do a monologue all the time; he wants to be the leading lady, cameraman, heavy and director all in one. So far in my experience that attitude has never proved successful."

Our conversation here drifted toward the finding of the most celebrated of these funny people. It is thought by some that Sennett could not have helped Chaplin to fame and fortune. But to me, the reverse seems true. He could, or should have been able to. He is the strong, wise, elemental director and master, really. There is an impressive and, for some I am sure, a terrifying force to him. I can easily see how he could manage fourteen lots and a hundred comedy stages, if he chose. He has convictions and the poise that is born of them. And convictions spring from innate perception.

But to return. As Mr. Sennett told it, he had in his Keystone Comedy Company, in New York, at that time a comedian, Ford Sterling. This Sterling was going to quit him because, as he expressed it, "he could get more money than I could pay him."

"I tried to coax him to stay but there was nothing doing. Then I remembered a little Englishman I'd seen one night a Morris' three-a-day on the American roof. And I sent around and hired him."

"Charlie Chaplin, you mean?"

"Yes."

"And what about Chaplin? Was he anything like what he is today?"

"Not so different. Of course we've all had a lot of experience since then. Chaplin didn't have that make-up he uses now. That costume was assembled on my lot out there in Los Angeles." (By then the Keystone Company had removed to Los Angeles.) "He tried out several different make-ups before he found that one. The first he used was that of a drunk--a man in evening clothes, with a red nose--the old stuff, you see. It didn't go very well, in fact wasn't different enough to give it originality. Then he tried other things--I forget just what. In those days we used to get on new make-ups and run around the stage to see if we could get a laugh from the rest of the gang. One day Chaplin took a pair of Chester Conklin's baggy trousers, the small derby that Roscoe Arbuckle always wore, and the big shoes which were a part of Ford Sterling's old makeup. The cane was one of Chaplin's own props--he always used a cane. Well, as soon as I saw the get-up, I knew that was IT.

"I remember one thing about Chaplin. He was the most interested person where he himself, his future, the kind of thing he was trying to do, was concerned, that I ever knew. He wanted to work--and nearly all the time. We went to work at eight o'clock and he was there at seven. We quit at five, say, or later, but he'd still be around at six, and wanting to talk about his work to me all the time. The average actor, as maybe you know, is just an actor. When it's quitting time, he's through. His job is done. He's thinking of something else--maybe even when he's working--and he wants to get

away so he can attend to it. But these personality people are different.

"Why, this fellow Chaplin used to fairly sweat if he thought he hadn't done a thing as well as he should have. And he was always complaining of this, that, and the other--the kind of director he had, the kind of actors that worked with him, that his part wasn't big enough, that he ought to have more stage room to do the thing the way he wanted to do it. And when the time came that he could see the film of the day's work, he was always there, whereas, most of the others in the picture would never come around. And if anything in the run didn't please him, he'd click his tongue or snap his fingers and twist and squirm. 'Now, why did I do that that way? What was the matter with me, anyhow? So and so (the director) should have caught that. Heavens, it's terrible. There's always something wrong.'

"Chaplin's one fellow who has to work alone, and alone he works.

"And," he went on, "Harry Langdon is another of the same sort. He came to me four or five years ago and I picked him for a sure thing. About the same case as Chaplin--same temperament--only I think him the greater artist."

"Why?"

"A wider range of emotions and so a wider appeal."

I took the matter under silent critical examination.

"And in Langdon the same restless energy and criticism of everything. Why, nothing was ever right, because, like Chaplin, he had his own ideas, exactly, of how everything should be done. And he didn't want to be interfered with, although, of course, he was there under contract and had to take direction from others."

"Are women stars more or less difficult than men to handle--artistically or commercially?" I here interpolated.

"Less so, for me, I think. I can't speak for anyone else. They may be more temperamental at times in regard to this point and that--things of no great consequence artistically or practically--but they're not so eager to run things all alone. They 'troop' better. Most often you can hold them by showing them that you're trying to do the best you can under the circumstances.

"Gloria Swanson had one of the most delightful personalities of any girl on our lot when she played in our comedies. Besides being sincere and conscientious and a hard worker, she had charm that attracted the admiration of everyone who came in contact with her."

It must have been twenty minutes of, or after, for here we both paused and rested. And then, after a time, we came back to the matter of humor in connection with women--whether they had it to the same degree as men--whether there were as many humorous or witty or waggish women as men. Decidedly not, thought Mr. Sennett, and some difference in the sexes must account for it. Yet now and then, as he explained, there appeared the real woman wag or wit, and how excellent she was. Instantly he cited Mabel Normand, and after her Louise Fazenda, and then Polly Moran. Distinctly they had humor. And in the case of Mabel Normand, it was so elusive and yet so real that while you knew it was there, yet you could scarcely say where it was. Why, that girl could walk down the aisle of a church, in the midst of services, and without offense to anybody, and without any outward sign of any kind that you could definitely point to, could get a laugh, or at least a smile, and from everybody.

"I don't know what it is," he interjected here. "For the life of me I couldn't tell you how or why. But she can do it. And Louise Fazenda can almost do it. As for all the other women I know, mostly you have to create humor for them. It isn't inside. They can get it over if you drill them, but unless you do they haven't so much to offer--and that goes for some who are pretty fair in pictures." (He declined to say who.)

"I was just thinking of a nice woman we had out there at the studio." He laughed at this point. "Good actress, too. Played crazy parts that we created for her, but did it under protest sometimes because she didn't always like it." (And all this in connection with what I was just saying.) "Well, we got up a part in which she had to wear a big red wig and a cauliflower ear." And here he went off into another low chuckle that would bring anyone to laughing.

"What a shame!" I said, thinking of the hard-working, self-respecting

actress.

"I know," he replied. "It was sort of rough." And he laughed again. "But we couldn't let her off." And into that line I read the very base and cornerstone of that ribald Rabelaisian gusto and gaiety that has kept a substantial part of America laughing with him all of these years. Slapstick vigor--the burlesque counterpart of sentiment--the grotesquely comic mask set over against the tragic.

Sennett is obviously the artist who takes delight in developing latent possibilities in screen aspirants. For he now began to tell me of others in this grotesque field in whose future he had the greatest faith. One of these is a youth by the name of Eddie Quillan, now working for him, of whom he said: "Now, there's a boy who would make good." (That unquenchable enthusiasm for developing talent.)

"What makes you think so?" I said.

"Well, he has talent. He is enthusiastic, and he has a line of his own. Just like every other fellow that gets over, he likes to work and he criticizes himself. The more I see of his work, the more sure I am he is going to be a success."

He then spoke of a girl, Madeline Hurlock, who gave no particular promise of stardom at first.

"I tried her out," he said, "and most of us were puzzled at first because we put her in one thing and another and she didn't seem to do anything. Just stood around, as far as we could see. And we thought she was a total loss, or I did. But after a while we began to hear from exhibitors. They showed interest in her--liked her personality--asked who she was. Then I began to understand that there was something about the way she did stand around, perhaps, that was interesting to the public--her poise. So I began to surround her with the kind of material that would bring her out. And she herself, the more she becomes used to this work, is developing characteristics and stunts which are certain to make her into a sure-fire personality if she keeps on."

"Another star?" I said.

"I think so," he replied. "And then," he went on, that same light of the creator as well as discoverer in his eye, "we have a kid--a baby girl--whose mother brought her in to me--Mary Ann Jackson. Hundreds and hundreds of babies are brought in to be tried out, but it's just like it is in everything else--one stands out and another doesn't and we were lucky enough in her case to find a baby we think is going to develop into a national celebrity. I am not saying that because these people are connected with me, because new personalities are coming up everywhere. I always notice that as one personality passes into oblivion, there's always another comes along somewhere."

"And you think you have three of 'em?" I asked.

"Well, yes, that's what I think," he replied.

But there still remained the Mack Sennett of the bathing beauty fame to interpret and I wanted to talk of that, to say nothing of the beauty herself, as a national and even international feature--the only successful rival, as I see it, to Mr. Ziegfeld and his Follies Girls that has ever appeared in America or elsewhere. And so I said: "And now what about your bathing beauties, Mr. Sennett? What have you to say for that as an idea--artistic or otherwise?"

"Well, what's wrong with it?" he countered. And one could see the ancient "Irish" in him simmer.

"Nothing wrong with it," I replied. "Didn't I pay a special admission price the time you sent your group around the country? But was it your idea or someone else's--that of organizing and sending such a group around? And was she a purely commercial proposition, likely to bring in hard cash, as someone has charged, or an artistic idea to you?"

He paused to think and finally replied: "Nothing so definite as either. Everyone likes to look at a beautiful girl. It sort of helps out the days, doesn't it? Besides, in the kind of burlesque comedy I was doing, there had to be a relief in the form of beauty of some sort. There's no chance for sentiment in the kind of thing we do--or very little. You can't have a girl stick her toe in a brook and make moon eyes at a boy across the way in

burlesque. Mostly--especially in the old days--it was sorta rough, and we had to have something or someone as a contrast, so I thought of sticking in a pretty girl or two--the prettier the better."

"And that's all there was to it?"

"Well, nearly all. Of course, then the business grew and we had a lot of them around, somehow the idea of bathing pictures came up. I suppose we did a lot of those comedies by the sea, with bathing girls in them, because they made a pretty picture. And then I suppose someone on a newspaper first called them 'Bathing Beauties.' But pretty soon, just the same, there she was, labeled. And pretty soon after that, it became 'Mack Sennett's Bathing Beauties' because I was almost the only comedy producer in the field who used them. And I had the most of them. Well, when an idea like that catches on, and you see that the general public is interested, you'd be dumb if you didn't see what to do about it. I don't know now whether I or someone else suggested getting the girls together and sending them around one season--I think it was one of the first distributing agents here in New York that first thought of it--but anyhow, it finally looked to be the thing to do and we did it."

"You did it, you mean."

"Well, I agreed to let it be done."

"And created a more striking thing than the Follies."

"You think so?"

"I do."

"Thanks. Of course, there was criticism. There always is where a lot of pretty girls are used in a public way like that. Besides, human beings will be human beings and in the old days when the business was new there wasn't as much restraint as there is now. Couldn't be. Things were too disorganized--too many things to do and think of. And, of course, there was talk whenever a girl cut up a little, or ran away and got married. And there always will be undesirables show up in every line of work, even among girls. But today we don't stand for them. We want nice girls--the kind of girls who live at home. And what's more," and here he grew quite emphatic, "we give

them every chance of leading just the sort of life that the public respects. And I guess the public knows it, for there's very little criticism of any kind any more. Mostly we're looking for the girl of ambition and with talent, especially where she's pretty--the one who wants to get somewhere--and when you get that kind you find girls who can look out for themselves, and want to--they don't need watching."

His manner indicated that he had said all he could think of in regard to the bathing beauty and I could think of no further phase of her to discuss. However, there was another thing that interested me--a comment he had made on the everyday actor as such--the one without much talent or ambition, yet whom he uses in numbers, and so I said: "What about the average actor--you who love the potential star so much?"

"Oh, him," he said reminiscently. "Well, he's all right. I shouldn't really say anything about him, for, after all, he is what he is, and he can't help it, and what's more, he's useful--very. The only trouble with him as far as his own future is concerned is that he's lazy--or if not that, then he feels no call or inspiration to do anything more than just the thing he's told to do or is shown how to do.

"I've employed a lot of them in my time, and there's no essential difference in the temperament of any of them.

"Sometimes I have to laugh when I think of these people, and sometimes I'm sorry for them, for here they are, with the same opportunities as Chaplin, Langdon, Harold Lloyd, Fairbanks, Pickford, Swanson--anybody--and they do just what they have to do and no more. They are easily satisfied. They do not know the restlessness and discontent that is forever eating at the heart of a real artist. Nor do they ever experience the bubbling enthusiasm and burning ambition and unshakable optimism of the fellow who gets there. The difference between the ordinary actor and the artist might be compared to the difference between an adult and a child; the adult, prosaic, practical, working from necessity, and rather disillusioned.

"The artist--the child--a gypsy, curious, impractical, enthusiastic, a tireless worker at the work he loves, idealistic, never knowing quiet and

contentment.

"Well, I guess the average actor is just a tradesman, working at his trade; he might as well punch a clock with the carpenters and mechanics.

"You say to one of them, 'Well, you have to be a fireman today. Here's the part.' And they'll take it and get instructions as to about what's wanted. Then they'll dress it and put in the usual funny stuff about a fireman--the stuff they know or thought of years before. But anything new? No! Or very little--so little that it doesn't make any real difference in their standing from year to year. Yet you know always that whatever you give them to do they'll do well enough, but that's all, Just so they get by. And after that, well, they're thinking just like any clerk--or nearly so--of what time it is. Maybe they have a wife and kids, as most of them have--and they live in some neighborhood where they know everybody and go to parties or dinner, or to church, or to lodge-meeting at night. Or maybe it's some real estate deal they're interested in and thinking of at the very time they're working, playing those crazy roles. Yet any one of them with a spark of fire could step out of the ranks and begin to attract general attention. But they haven't got it.

"And it isn't their fault. They can't get it. They weren't born with that urge that makes the artist work his head off all day, then think and talk and play his work the rest of the time."

And here he went off into one of those still, contemplative moods, laying his chin in one of his interesting, forceful hands, and thinking, as well he might.

And lastly there was the matter of Mr. Sennett himself--his present "right now" mood in regard to himself and his work. For back of this gray, somewhat carelessly dressed man, as I could feel, and even see by his manner, was his fortune of at least fifteen millions. And world-wide fame for his name. And his big studio in Los Angeles, with its many big stages; to say nothing of companies. And on a mountain, which he is having cut off at the very top in order to give himself sky space and field breadth, a great house. And his old Irish-Canadian mother, as I understand, is to have a special

entrance in this grand house, so that she won't be compelled to come in contact with the crowd he must ever meet.

A charming, sensitive touch, that. And so I said:

"And now, what of the future, Mr. Sennett? Any special developments?"

"No, none in particular that I see at the moment. Of course business conditions are changing. We produce more and more films. The public taste is changing.

"They want better dressed comedians--fewer axes and the like of that, maybe. But apart from that--"

"Are you as much interested in comedy as ever?"

"Just as much--yes--maybe more so."

"Never get weary of it all?"

"Oh, I won't say that. For a few minutes, maybe, at times. Not so much longer."

"Haven't ever a desire to get away for a long time and rest?"

"Well, sometimes I think I have. But I soon get over it. If anything, the game gets more interesting to me. I can scarcely stay away from the studio. Take this particular trip. I did think I'd like to come here and stay three months or so for a rest or change somehow.

"But here I am--only here three or four weeks and anxious to get back. Habit, maybe.

"You might call it a bad one--my ruling weakness or sin. Well, that's the way it is." He smiled amusedly and I could see so clearly in his face his love for his work. He will die making comedies.

But here I added by way of finis:

"You don't intend to try any more melodrama, I suppose?"

"Oh, I don't know. I may--" he laughed.

"Or dramas? Or tragedies?"

"No tragedies. That's your game. You can have it."

"And as for bathing beauties?"

"Well, when the public gets tired of looking at attractive women--"

He stirred, and I rose.

Together we strolled out into the lobby of the Ambassador.

Already a telegram or two for him--a boy with a letter.

"If you want to, and will, come out and stay around the lot for three weeks or a month, and see for yourself. I'll throw everything open to you. You can look round the stages and make friends with the actors and directors, sit in on the comedy-building conferences, interview anybody you like--even me--go out to the homes of those who work for me and see how they live.

"It's an interesting world, and it might make a book--"

"Or a Mack Sennett comedy," I replied.

"Or a Mack Sennett comedy," he repeated.

The interview was over.

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WILLIAM DESMOND TAYLOR: A DOSSIER (Scarecrow Press, 1991)

* T A Y L O R O L O G Y *
* A Continuing Exploration of the Life and Death of William Desmond Taylor *
* *
* Issue 84 -- December 1999 Editor: Bruce Long *
* TAYLOROLOGY may be freely distributed *

CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE:

Margaret Gibson's Deathbed Confession:
"I Killed William Desmond Taylor!"

What is TAYLOROLOGY?

TAYLOROLOGY is a newsletter focusing on the life and death of William Desmond Taylor, a top Paramount film director in early Hollywood who was shot to death on February 1, 1922. His unsolved murder was one of Hollywood's major scandals. This newsletter will deal with: (a) The facts of Taylor's life; (b) The facts and rumors of Taylor's murder; (c) The impact of the Taylor murder on Hollywood and the nation; (d) Taylor's associates and the Hollywood silent film industry in which Taylor worked. Primary emphasis will be given toward reprinting, referencing and analyzing source material, and sifting it for accuracy.

The class at Georgia Tech on multimedia "Advanced Design and Production," with their Fall 1999 semester class project on the Taylor case, has set up another web site on the Taylor case at <http://www.lcc.gatech.edu/wdt>

The E! cable TV channel has devoted an episode of their "Mysteries & Scandals" series to Mabel Normand. The show was quite good, with a nice selection of film clips and stills, and the talking heads included authors Betty Harper Fussell, William Thomas Sherman, and Sidney D. Kirkpatrick, all of whom did an excellent job. It was a very nice half-hour introduction to her life and career.

Margaret Gibson's Deathbed Confession:

"I Killed William Desmond Taylor!"

Introduction by Bruce Long

It was in 1996 that I first received e-mail from Raphael Long, whom I had never met and is not related to me. He related a unique and fascinating perspective on the Taylor case, and we have continued to exchange e-mail for the past three years. The account he had given me was incomplete (omitting the identity of the killer) so I never had mentioned it in past issue of TAYLOROLOGY. Recently I was contacted by production companies from both The History Channel and A&E; both were producing documentaries on the Taylor case. In addition to my input, they wanted to know if I could refer them to others with information about the case. I contacted Raphael Long and asked him if he wanted me to put them in touch with him. After a few days' consideration, he agreed, and so he was subsequently contacted and interviewed by both production companies. He also agreed to also write a brief account for TAYLOROLOGY, which appears below.

What Did I know and When did I know it?

by Raphael F. Long

Over several years, I'd had a small exchange of e-notes with Bruce Long of the Taylorology Web Site regarding various aspects of the February 1, 1922 homicide of screen director William Desmond Taylor. On September 18, 1999,

I received an e-note from Bruce asking permission to give my name and e-address to (2) producers of programs apparently intent on reporting the Taylor affair. I possessed unique knowledge of the crime but had declined to say "who." On September 21, 1999, I received an e-note from a producer for the History Channel essentially asking for my "take" in the affair. He stated he was preparing a piece on the, as yet, unsolved murder of screen director William Desmond Taylor. I believe he is producing a series of productions with the inference that the perpetrators had escaped detection as the common thread. After several exchanges of messages, I acquiesced and let the proverbial "cat out of the bag." With the exception of immediate members of my family and a few select friends, this had been my little secret for almost 35 years.

A week later, on September 28, 1999, I received a phone call from a producer for A & E. Essentially, she was seeking the same information. Although I talked to her at length, I did not reveal who the culprit was. Not being familiar with entertainment industry business practices, I contacted Bruce Long again to get his take on the ethics of responding to two competing producers. After being assured that it was acceptable to respond to both parties, I furnished the identical information to the A & E producer.

I did not seek out these production companies, they came to me. I do not have a book to sell or anything to gain from these productions. Other than a few dollars to cover some incidental expenses, I was not paid by either production company. And I most certainly don't need another "fifteen minutes" of fame. I've done that twice in this lifetime. It's as much a curse as a blessing.

My experience with the William Desmond Taylor escapade began in 1949. A very kindly little old lady purchased a small house three doors down the street from my parents' home. However, she was reclusive to the extreme. Despite this, my mother, in her usual way with people, soon became fast friends with

the woman. We learned little except that her husband had been an oil company executive who had been killed during the early stages of World War II. She subsisted on his pension.

As I said, she was reclusive which is not at all unusual for residents of the community. She seldom went out and only then to visit her doctor or the veterinarian for her cat. She had no car. Groceries were brought to her by the checker of the local market. She allowed vegetation to totally obscure her small house although she kept it well watered and pruned. This would continue for fifteen years and no one thought it the least bit unusual. It was how she lived; so what; she wasn't bothering anyone.

One Wednesday afternoon, October 21, 1964, all of this would change. As was my custom, I came by my parents' home around 4:30 in the afternoon. My father was in Nevada at the time so I looked in on my mother. Arriving at the house, I found no one around. However, there was some sort of ruckus at the woman's house. I walked to her house and up the staircase to the rear door. There laying on the floor was our neighbor obviously in a great deal of pain with my mother hovering over her.

She had a heart attack. In that era before 911, my mother had called the Hollywood Police ambulance. When she attempted to give them instructions on how to get to the property, the officer brusquely replied "We know all that!" Well they got hopelessly lost in the hills and took 45 minutes to arrive.

Meanwhile, our neighbor was highly agitated and obviously in a great deal of pain. Apparently, she had just converted to Roman Catholicism and was deeply concerned with the consequences of the hereafter. She wanted a priest, which was impossible, and she wanted to confess her "sins." She then went on to explain that she had been a silent screen actress. She further stated that she had shot and killed a man by the name of William Desmond Taylor. And she continued by saying that they nearly caught her and that she had to flee the

country. There were several other claims that she made which I simply don't recall. Our only concern at the moment was in getting her immediate medical attention. And besides, none of this made one bit of sense. This wasn't the woman we knew for fifteen years. The idea that this kindly woman could take a gun and shoot another human being was preposterous. The statement about being a actress was equally unbelievable. It was obvious to me that she was suffering under some pain-inspired delirium. At the time, I must confess my total ignorance of the name William Desmond Taylor.

Sorry to say, our friend and neighbor never made it to the hospital, thanks, in part, to an egotistical policeman who wouldn't accept directions. My parents made arrangements through Callanan Mortuary for a Roman Catholic Mass at Blessed Sacrament Church and internment at Calgary Cemetery in Culver City. That was the end of that, or at least so we thought.

Several months would pass. Then, one afternoon, a letter arrived from an attorney by the name of Andrew Monk. We had been named beneficiaries of the late neighbor's estate, provided we met certain obligations of the estate. And you can bet that the first item on the list was his fee! We also had to come up with money for other bequests. Among those were Blessed Sacrament Church on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, Doctor William S. Hawkins along with his assistant, Norton V. Stouffer, of Wayfarers Animal Hospital, 2024 Hyperion Avenue, in the Silver Lake area, Karlheinz Schueller, M.D. her regular physician, Cornelia Pearson, the market clerk who brought her groceries since she wouldn't allow herself to be seen in the Beachwood Village and a stipend to care for her cat, Rajah. In return, we would receive the woman's unencumbered home, furniture, and personal property. We borrowed the money to cover these obligations and, roughly a year and a half later, probate closed. Meanwhile, we had gained access to the property. On entering her home, we discovered little of consequence as she obviously lived at or below the poverty line. What little furniture was of no value. However, there was a miniature case resembling a trunk. It contained a

bundle of letters along with many theatrical stills of a much younger woman. Could she have been a silent screen actress? A quick check with the Motion Picture Academy's Library revealed that there never had been a silent screen performer by the name of Pat Lewis.

At this point, my mother made a further observation. Apparently she already knew of Pat's possible involvement in the murder of William Desmond Taylor. And she only came out with it after the fact. According to mom, Pat would come by each evening to watch television. One evening, they were watching "Ralph Story's Los Angeles." When Ralph did a whimsical piece on the William Desmond Taylor murder, Pat became hysterical and blurted out that she'd killed him and thought it was long forgotten. But mother never once said a word to any of us about this incident.

[2014 Note by Bruce Long: The episode was broadcast on October 20, 1964, less than 24 hours before her fatal heart attack. See <http://www.taylorology.com/rs1a.pdf>]

In 1964, I had neither the time nor the initiative to pursue the matter any further. So I simply took what few materials I'd accumulated and stashed them away hoping someday to take them up again. There was, however, a clue to her identity. Written across the face of one of the photos was the name "Patricia Palmer."

Isn't hindsight wonderful? Looking back across thirty-five years, I now believe everything that woman said during her last moments of life was the absolute truth. From her letters and papers, from her filmography and from the public records that still exist, she was very much the central player in the drama which took the life of William Desmond Taylor. My most compelling evidence is an intangible. One had to see that woman, in the throes of death, confessing her transgressions and pleading for some sort of ecclesiastical forgiveness. It was a very emotional event. In my ignorance of the time, I didn't understand how emotional. The story of her escape is

far more dramatic yet she paid a terrible price for her transgression.

[The remainder of this issue is by Bruce Long, whose commentary is at the very end.]

The Film Career of Margaret Gibson a.k.a. Patricia Palmer

Ella Margaret Gibson entered the film industry in 1912, when she obtained a job with Vitagraph in Santa Monica, using the screen name Margaret Gibson. She remained with Vitagraph for three years. During six months of that time, William Desmond Taylor was acting in the same studio. Taylor and Gibson made four films together: "The Love of Tokiwa," "The Riders of Petersham," "The Kiss," and "A Little Madonna." In 1915 she left Vitagraph and went to the Thomas Ince Film Company, where she made her most famous film, playing a small supporting role in "The Coward"--the film which made Charles Ray a star. Her next film contract was with Centaur, followed by films for Fox and then a series of Christie comedies. In 1918 she changed her screen name to Patricia Palmer, and returned to Vitagraph for nearly another year, then returned to Christie for more short comedies. She had supporting roles in two of William S. Hart's westerns, and then roles in other comedies and westerns. Her career continued on a general decline throughout the silent era, though she did have a very tiny part in "King of Kings." Her final feature film credit was the FBO film "The Little Savage" in 1929.

Her California death certificate (7053-21286) reads "Ella Margaret Arce AKA Ella Margaret Lewis AKA Patricia Palmer." Her last occupation is "actress," the industry is "Motion Pictures," and the last employing company is "Keystone Productions." Her date of death is October 21, 1964; the date of birth is listed as Sept. 14, 1894.

[The following news item took place one month after William Desmond Taylor departed Vitagraph.]

May 15, 1914

VARIETY

Infatuated Actor in Jail

Los Angeles, May 13.--Charles Thompson, an actor, aged 25, is in jail here charged with the theft of \$150 worth of jewelry, belonging to his landlady.

The baubles were presented by Thompson to Miss Margaret Gibson, leading woman of the Vitagraph Company, with whom Thompson is said to be infatuated.

Publicity Articles on Margaret Gibson a.k.a Patricia Palmer

We have only been able to locate a few publicity articles on Margaret Gibson or Patricia Palmer, and they are mostly very superficial.

* * * * *

October 3, 1914

MOVING PICTURE WORLD

Miss Margaret Gibson

Margaret Gibson, the little Vitagraph star connected with the Santa

Monica, Cal., studio, celebrated her nineteenth birthday on Monday, Sept. 14th, by giving an open-house reception in her new bungalow, erected on the cliff overlooking the ocean. It was in the nature of an old fashioned house-warming, the majority of the guests being photoplayers now in the California district.

Miss Gibson, or "Gibby," as she is most generally known, was born in Colorado Springs, Colo., in 1895. Both her parents were professionals, which accounted for her entering the profession when she was little other than a mere baby. In all her life, she has never really known a home, for hotels are far from the home usually enjoyed by a normal human being. Her longing for a home finally induced her to enter pictures. She made her debut with the Vitagraph company, and in less than three years has risen to a position of stellar importance. With the thought of a home ever uppermost in her mind, she has worked hard and saved diligently. A few months ago work was started on her bungalow, and the grand opening, the biggest day in the picture star's life, was her nineteenth birthday.

She was like a kid with a new toy. In the midst of her merriment she tried to sing "Home, Sweet, Home," but it was too much for her. She wept like a child, but from pure joy. And her many guests united in claiming it was the most beautiful compliment any home ever received, for the little Vitagraph star, who had never known a home in all her life, welcomed her friends into her own home, which she had worked for and paid for all herself. Few people ever have such a superb opportunity to realize the wonderful meaning of that little word "home."

* * * * *

September 1914
MOTION PICTURE

Margaret Gibson Wins First Prize
for Having the Prettiest Bathing Suit

When the annual bathing girls' automobile parade was held at Ocean Park, Cal., all the swimmers around the beach started to get busy making bathing-suits. Little Miss Margaret Gibson, the charming leading lady of the Western Vitagraph, also got busy and, knowing the heart interest of Elks, bethought herself to represent that grand lodge in the parade. Forthwith she went to a fancy dressmaker and posed for a bathing suit. The suit was made of silk, purple and white, and when the day of the big parade on the promenade came, Margaret was the applauded one.

The first prize carried with it the honor of being the handsomest girl with the niftiest suit, \$50 and a beautiful silver and gold loving cup. Of course this little champion of the screen had to carry off first prize, and she did it well, too. Eddie Dillon, of Mutual fame, and W. H. Clune, the Southern California movie magnate, were two of the judges, and they decided right away that Miss Gibson was the winner of first prize, and it was on no account of kindredism for being in the same business, either. It was for the merits of the girl and her original bathing suit.

In the morning one of the city papers had the pink sheet first page devoted to the film star, and many cartoons told the tale of the beach parade.

Miss Gibson is studying the tango, and has become quite adept at dancing the latest steps, which are being seen much in Los Angeles hotels and at the beach resort dance pavilions, where the society people dance.

* * * * *

November 1914
MOVIE PICTORIAL

"Gibby"
The Star Who Started a Fad

Ella Margaret Gibson didn't mean to do it--oh, mercy, not at all. But Fate came along at the opportune moment, and that's how the fad began.

Miss Gibson is not only the youngest leading lady in the Vitagraph Stock Company, out where the Occident waves its greetings to the Orient beyond, but she is also just a trifle superstitious. But who, pray, among actor folk, is not? They have their mascots, their omens, their hunches, their lucky days, and their evil hours, and Miss Gibson is very much like all the others who are "to the manner born." But, why not? She is the daughter of actor-folk. Her mother possessed a voice like the gentle coming of dawn--and her mother's father sang, and her mother's mother danced. So it was simply born in the blood of this little actress to dote on mascots--without any thought or plan of starting a new idea similar to the federal reserve banks.

But let us hasten slowly, because it is a treat, indeed, to become acquainted with this little star--and she's a very pretty star, too--a constant star, as it were--not at all like the variable kind.

She was born right beneath the towering majesty of Pike's Peak, that looms many thousand feet above her natal city, Colorado Springs. But early in life, Miss Gibson was on the wing. She was born and bred to the boards--and it gets into one's blood when it is so ordained.

Now, as actresses grow older they are prone to forget their day of original appearance in the never-ending, but always-changing, drama called Life. But when they are young, they are not so particular about hiding their ages--and on September 14 last Miss Gibson was nineteen--just a little girl with a woman's ability.

Of course, when one must begin on the stage so young, one needs must pick up an education on the gallop, which explains why Miss Gibson did her studying in three states--Colorado, Kansas and California. This proves that she is thoroughly western, in birth, breeding, spirit, education. But her learning was not stinted--and, besides, she had the capacity to learn, and that spells success.

When twelve years of age, little Miss Gibson was lisping her lines in the "legit." Later on, she appeared in vaudeville, and before she was fifteen she was the ingenue and soubrette in a permanent stock company located in her own home town. During the period she was with that

organization she played not under one hundred parts. But there is a lure to the silent drama, just as Australians tell us there is witchery to the vast "Never-Never" that is splendid because of its terrible loneliness. What was more natural, then, than that Miss Gibson should desert the first-hand method of entertaining and do her acting before the busily clicking camera of the cinematograph man?

In 1912, this lively, likely, likable and wholesome little actress was in Los Angeles--above which hung destiny's star. When she applied to the Western Vitagraph Company she was engaged immediately, and for a while she played in minor parts, becoming accustomed to the camera and its limitations. But she had the artistic soul within her, and soon the multitudes of weary men and women who attend the picture shows began to take note of her beauty and cleverness--and they made a place in their hearts for her, where all places must be created before a star ever exists. They do not simply decide to be stars--and all the advertising on earth won't make them stars. It must be deep in their hearts, and paramount in their minds, just as it was with little Miss Gibson.

It was not long before Ella Margaret Gibson was leading lady. It was her first love in the life of the films, and it has been her only love, in the, in the films, because, when the story of Miss Gibson's little adventure is recited, we cannot hold ourselves down to any professions of her not loving elsewhere. In fact, if she did not love just a little--but let us not hasten. There are still other things to tell.

Among the more recent successes of Miss Gibson were her leads in "The Riders of Petersham," "The Love of Tokiwa," "The Hidden House," "Francine," "Bianca," "Auntie," "Ginger's Reign," "Back to Eden," "The Little Madonna," "The Kiss," "The Outlaw," "Mareea, the Half-Breed," "Out in Happy Hollow," "The Old Oak's Secret," as well as innumerable others. In all, this star has been featured in a hundred Vitagraph pictures.

With the blood of the West in her veins, it is logical that Miss Gibson should be an excellent horse-woman, motorist, and all-around out-of-door person. She believes that buildings are all right, so far as they go, but

that the open country, with its flat reaches of plain, its towering hills, its fresh air and general joy, is the land for girls who like the blush of the rose in their cheeks, and a spring in their steps. That is where real beauty is bred--and Miss Gibson is entitled to the real beauty classification--beautiful of features, beautiful of form--a girl in a million. This latter is referred respectfully to the young man in the case--or should we say case? At any rate, there was a young man--but why shouldn't there be? Today, were it not for Miss Gibson's kind consideration, that young man would have a credit rating as low as the tide just when it is finished with ebbing.

But again, come to think it over, what Miss Gibson did was just the most natural thing on earth to do. She was a real "good fellow," and now thousands of girls who have heard of the incident have decided to follow her excellent example--because who can tell when a garter will come in handy?

There--we said it! The story hinges around a garter, and the garter hinges around--well, a little superstition, let us say. Back in the old days (if a girl of nineteen years is entitled to refer to "old days!"), Miss Gibson received, as her first professional salary, a shining twenty-dollar gold piece. And did she spend it? Not at all. She did something else with it; something very safe and sensible, and the idea pleased her so much that she took another double golden eagle, and did the same thing with that--and then she had a pair of them; not that the public could ever know--because there are some things the world could not, and certainly should not, know. This was one of them--or two of them. And every time Miss Gibson took a step, those gold-pieces were given a ride! They were her mascots. They stood her in good stead as--shall we say supporters? Maybe that is it--supporters! They brought her opportunity--or, at any rate, were with her when opportunity beckoned. They were her constant companions by day, and remained close to her at night.

Miss Gibson is always very considerate of her friends--be they gold-pieces or human friends--and sometimes gold-pieces seem to be more human than human beings, because sometimes mortals are not worth a cent, and the gold coins are always worth a great deal--full face value, be they held captive in

dainty platinum rings or used to pay one's way. But Miss Gibson has a wealth of loyalty within her soul. She is considerate. That is part of the westland breeding--and the countless thousands who have viewed her work on the screen realize that no girl could perform so well without feeling every emotion that she portrays. We say "perform" advisedly. Acting is the proper term, but performance of duty is deeper than acting.

Miss Gibson receives many flattering letters. All pretty little leading ladies do. Men fall in love with them in the pictures--and girls covet their success. But this little lady has ridden through all this empty flattery with as much sound sense as a business man would have--because acting is her business in life.

The others in the Vitagraph company are champions of their leading lady. They like her--are her best boosters--because they know her best, even down to the story of the gold-pieces. This we continually forget, because it is the most reasonable thing on earth to keep remembering these little merits of Miss Gibson, and we must surely include this other merit.

It was night time in Los Angeles--and the western metropolis is alive when the sun creeps low and starts getting ready for business in China. The gay cafes were ablaze with good cheer, music and excellent food. And at one of the tables in the very best of these restaurants were Miss Gibson and a young man. Who he is we profess not to know. But he was there, and he ordered with a lavish hand. Nothing was too good for the dainty lady across from him. He urged goodies upon her--scorned price--was the best little good fellow in the wide, wide world. But with every bill-of-lading there should be an invoice. The waiter handed the young man the statement of account, and it was like the fatted calf just about the time the prodigal came home. The fatted calf part of the story is apropos, too. And then the young gentleman, with all the sangfroid at his command, reached into his inner coat-pocket. He reached farther, and then a crimson hue began to mount to his temples. He felt in all his other pockets, and his discomfiture was alarming. But the wallet that had been had ceased to be! There he was--surrounded by plenty, and as poor as a desert hermit!

"I'm--I'm--afraid," he stammered, but Miss Gibson understood. She has a little way of understanding about her that is a delicious relief in a crisis like this.

"You just wait here," she told him, "and I will be back shortly--with the money."

It was a bright twenty-dollar gold-piece she laid in his hand--a trembling, thankful hand, that was humid with drear anticipation of the patrol-wagon, a stern judge, a story in the morning papers--ugh! such complications!

But he paid the check, feed [sic] the waiter lavishly, breathed blessing untold on his fair companion--and departed. And then, just before bidding her good-night, he asked timidly how she made the "raise."

"Why," Miss Gibson confessed, "it was simple enough. You see, when I was a very little girl, the first twenty dollars I earned I saved. It brought me great fortune--and then I saved another--in the same way. They were set in platinum buckles. But I think I had better go now. The safety-pin isn't holding very well."

"The safety-pin?" her friend questioned.

"Why, yes, stupid," Miss Gibson flung back, as she vanished in the doorway, "this night's entertainment has cost me a garter--!"

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April 16, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Margaret Gibson Leaves Vitagraph
for New York Motion Picture Co.,
under Director Richard Stanton

Ella Margaret Gibson is the youngest leading lady in the New York Motion Picture Company. She is the star of the Western contingent located in Santa Monica, Cal., and in spite of her youthfulness has portrayed many parts. Her

career has been brimful of interesting events, and her record of artistic achievements is one which any actress could well envy. Miss Gibson was born in Colorado Springs, Colo., Sept. 14, 1895, which makes her but nineteen years old on her last birthday. Her parents were both professional entertainers, her father being a musician and her mother a vocalist. The father's name is Ellsbarry J. Gibson, born and raised in Iowa and emanating from Scotch-Irish stock. The mother's maiden name was Cellia Ella Fisher, born in Jamesport, Mo., of English ancestors. In her youth the mother was noted for her beauty and her ability as a singer. The mother's father was also a professional vocalist, and the mother's mother was an exceptionally successful professional dancer. It can be readily seen that Margaret Gibson comes by her great talent naturally. Miss Gibson's schooling, so far as public schools are concerned, was somewhat limited, owing to the professional activities of her parents. She attended school in Colorado, Kansas and California, but the greater portion of her education was received at the hands of her mother, who, because of her early life and experiences in professional circles, realized the disadvantage under which the child of professionals is usually educated. The professional environment in which Miss Gibson was raised, and a prudent mother's thoughtfulness, has done more for the little Vitagraph star, in the matter of education, than most girls receive in many years at girls' colleges. In a semi-professional way, Miss Gibson has been appearing on the dramatic stage practically all of her life. Her first bona fide theatrical engagement was playing a child's part when about twelve years old. This was in Denver, Colo. Her success was all that could be expected. Later on, she made several tours through the western country, playing vaudeville engagements. Before she was fifteen she was the ingenue and soubrette in a permanent stock company located in her home town, Colorado Springs. With that organization she portrayed nearly one hundred different parts. Early in 1912 Miss Gibson became interested in the possibilities of motion photography. Being employed in Los Angeles at the time, she applied to the western Vitagraph Company and was immediately engaged. For several weeks she portrayed minor parts in the picture, an

experience which taught her the demands of the camera. At this juncture the regular leading lady of the company was transferred to New York, and Miss Gibson was given an important part against the judgment of her managing director. Her years of successful theatrical work and her knowledge of the camera, made it possible for Miss Gibson to immediately demonstrate her right to the position. Her success was instantaneous and emphatic. She immediately was placed at the head of the Vitagraph western company and continued in that capacity. She has never appeared with any other film company.

Miss Gibson is essentially a western girl. She is a splendid horsewoman, a skillful automobile driver and a veritable fiend at "roughing it" in camp life. Every phase of rugged nature, with its animal life, makes direct appeal to Miss Gibson, with the result that this famous little Vitagraph star is simply a natural, free-from-care, modern girl, entirely devoid of the professional conceits and jealousies usually associated with successful actresses. Her knowledge and love of life in its natural forms, probably accounts for the direct naturalness and simplicity for which her professional work is justly celebrated.

Her first picture with the New York Motion Picture Co., is "The Sea Ghost," in two reels, directed by Richard Stanton.

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April 30, 1915
PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Margaret Gibson's Press Agent had Another Rush of
Words to his Typewriter. This is his Latest Literary Outburst.

...Miss Gibson's complexion is the envy of every photoplayer in Southern California. She attributes it to a lotion she uses, composed of native Russian tea and Siberian vodka. This wash is used twice daily, after which a

delicate skin tonic from Hungary is applied. How wonderful skin is maintained through continued use of a syrup made from prunes in France and the only cosmetic which she will apply to her face comes from Germany. Each of these toilet accessories used by Miss Gibson comes from the war zone and every solitary item had been advanced in price. The German cosmetic has increased to ten times its normal value.

Miss Gibson faced an awful predicament, for her radiant skin photographs better than any make-up ever conceived by man. Her director would never permit her to use a grease paint make-up, for her complexion gives the most natural appearance on the screen. But with the price of all her toilet articles raised out of all proportion, what was she to do? The answer is that she applied the usual make-up used by her fellow workers, and then came a long argument with her director.

This man went to the business manager, who called Miss Gibson into the private office. He demanded to know why she was ruining the biggest feature of her pictures. She explained about the war. He told her she must use none but her old methods. She replied that if her complexion meant so much to Inceville pictures, they would have to raise her weekly salary. They did so, so now her glorious complexion is permanently assured for pictures, and every one is satisfied except the several European monarchs who started all the trouble.

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December 11, 1915

MOTOGRAPHY

Margaret Gibson in Centaur Releases

Margaret Gibson, one of the most beautiful women in motion pictures and an actress of rare emotional ability, who has been playing ingenue roles in David Horsley's productions for the past two months, has been elevated to a featured position in one of the companies producing Centaur Features. As

such she will make her first appearance with the release of the two-reel Centaur Feature "The Arab's Vengeance," on the Mutual program, Dec. 16.

Miss Gibson's first appearance in motion pictures was made in 1912 when she joined the Vitagraph company. She then went with the New York Motion Picture Company, one of her appearances being in "The Coward," an Ince production featuring Frank Keenan. In September she joined Mr. Horsley. Her first part was that of the crippled sister in "The Protest," a Centaur Star Feature starring Crane Wilbur. Following this she played an important part in "Could a Man Do More?" another Centaur Star Feature with Mr. Wilbur.

Her splendid characterizations in these releases, coupled with her unusual attractiveness, led Mr. Horsley to conclude that she merited more than just a place in the cast and accordingly made arrangements to put her in a stellar position.

* * * * *

January 1, 1916
PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

[After a minister attacked the film studios as being rampant with immorality, members the film industry made defensive statements.]

...Miss Margaret Gibson of the Horsley studios, now playing in a five-reel picture, "The Soul Cycle," being produced by Director Davis, makes this statement:

"To me, it is outrageous, to read of this very rabid attack on the motion picture people. I have invariable been treated with the utmost courtesy and consideration by the male members of my profession. We are a very busy class of people, and to us, art is art! We really have not time to make anything less of it.

"It is people who find that time hangs heavily on their hands who get into mischief. Certainly that could not apply to motion picture people, and I desire to register a vigorous protest by the hardest working class of people I know, the moving picture people, to the slur cast upon their women

folk!"...

* * * * *

February 5, 1916

REEL LIFE

A Five Foot Star

"Height:--Five Feet.

"Weight, 110 pounds.

"Eyes, blue; hair, golden brown.

"Favorite parts:--ingenue and 'rag' characters.

"Recreations:--expert at horseback riding and swimming, also motorist."

This is almost all, except for a few more bare, cold details of what she had done during her short life, that the little mimeographed biography had to tell of Margaret Gibson, the Horsley (Mutual) star of Mutual Masterpictures, De Luxe Edition.

There is no doubt that she has just those characteristics she is credited with. But words are such clumsy tools when it comes to catching up the blueness of eyes, the golden glints in sun-shiny hair, the elusiveness and the charm of manners and of personality.

If it had been a canvas that an artist had been given, instead of a greasy sheet of copy paper on which the press agent was to jot snap judgments of her features, there would have been a glorious girl, with wind-swept hair and eyes the color of corn flowers. Those who have come to know her and to look for her on the screen do not have to be told that Margaret Gibson is beautiful.

Margaret Gibson was born in Colorado Springs, Colo., twenty years ago. She began her schooling in her native city and continued it until she was twelve years old, in Denver. At twelve she went on the stage, appearing on the Pantages vaudeville circuit for over two years. In 1909 she became a member of the Theodore Lorch Stock Company, of Denver, where she was hailed

as an emotional genius, and was cast in a wide variety of roles.

In 1912 she had an opportunity to become a member of a film company. She took it. Perhaps her best known role, while with this company, was in "A Child of the North." Later she was with several other companies, but left to become a member of the Horsley (Mutual) contingent in Los Angeles, Cal.

Her first role for Mutual was in "The Protest," with Crane Wilbur, in the role of Maggie, the poor little deformed sister.

Her second part was in "Could a Man Do More?"

It was after this that she was raised to the ranks of stardom, with the right to demand her name in bright lights over the theatre door. Margaret Gibson's first picture as a star is "The Soul's Cycle," a Mutual Masterpicture, De Luxe Edition, in which she plays the dual role of a beautiful Roman maiden and a modern New York heiress.

This new Mutual star is possessed of unusual understanding of life and of people. It is this quality which fits her peculiarly to play the "sympathy" roles for which she is so frequently cast. She is very young, but she has traveled and read and studied a great deal, and has absorbed much that many older people are very apt to overlook.

Although the pretty Horsley star is very serious-minded, she usually seems care-free and joyous as a bird. She is very athletic, and as the prim little biography states, she is an expert horsewoman, a swimmer and a motorist.

In fact, the pretty actress has had a special garage and stable built to accommodate her little green motor car and her silky black horse.

They are her two pets, she insists, and furthermore, she does not know which she loves the most. "Don," the horse, is splendid for a ride in the early mornings before work for the day has begun. The little green motor is at its best in the evenings, when it can travel miles and miles through the flower-scented air, and leave the memory of worries behind.

Miss Gibson is a cook, very much of a cook. She manages her little bungalow herself, and the servants who take care of it for her, adore her.

One of them is an old colored mammy, who has been the little star's

personal maid for a number of years.

"Dinah," as her name is, wears a gaily colored turban and a big enveloping apron over her expansive person, and she trails around after her "honey," as she calls her little mistress every minute Miss Gibson is at home.

"Dinah" is very much afraid of the camera. Several times the directors of the Horsley studio have tried to persuade her to lend herself to the local color of pictures, but the old mammy has always backed off and refused.

She believes that "pictures, shure am for beau'ful young ladies, but not for old colo'ed mammies."

Little Margaret Gibson's great ambition is to do work which will make people better and happier for her having done it. She loves to play appealing "sympathy" parts.

"I am glad I am a picture actress," she says, "because pictures reach so many people that the stage does not.

"I am fonder of 'rag' roles than any other type of screen portrayal," says the pretty little star.

"When I was on the stage, I could not really do good work unless I felt that the sympathy of the audience was with me. I did not care to play vampire roles.

"Of course, in working for pictures, we do not feel the response of an audience before us, but we know, instinctively, and from years of training, what sort of roles appeal to the public. I always want to be cast in 'sympathy' roles because I can work best then."

Critics who have watched the work of this young star since becoming a member of the Horsley studios are unanimous in their verdict that her career has but begun.

* * * * *

April 15, 1916
PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Margaret Gibson Shines as Youngest Film Star

Just what a star is according to the findings of astrologers is a matter for speculation, but in the instance of a particular little body who is brightly shining in the filmdom of Southern California, sending forth great rays to every section of the country, a suitable definition would be blue eyes, golden brown hair, 110 pounds, five feet in height and a wonderful personality. Then add to it all the name--Margaret Gibson.

The sphere in which this star may be found is the David Horsley studios, in the heart of Los Angeles, just outside of the shadows of some of the City's tall buildings. There she will remain for a period of two years, according to her contract, and each day her brilliancy will grow stronger, judging from its great development of the past few months.

There is considerably more to Miss Gibson than merely being a star. She has the distinction of being the youngest of the silent drama stars, allowing for the difference in meaning when leading woman, featured actress and star arises for treatment. This dainty little being has reached the foremost position, although her life in cinema land is scarcely four years old.

She started at the bottom late in 1912. A year later she displayed exceptional talent and was rewarded with more important work. Her excellent understanding of the portrayal of the various parts assigned to her brought her still higher in the art. She was given ingenue leads. Next came her opportunity to be featured and at last David Horsley saw the possibility of starring her, grasped it and the result is that she now rests on a brilliant pedestal erected through her own achievements.

In many respects little Margaret--that's what those who know her call her--is entirely different when compared with other screen stars. One of her peculiarities, if such a term may be used, is that she just hates automobiles. She says because they are not human and one cannot feel kindly toward them. But horses, Mercy! She just loves them. Silks and satins are other things which fail to attract Miss Gibson, and the happiest young woman in the world is she when she is cast to appear in rags.

Endurance would be a fitting addition to her name. And if it wouldn't sound too long, work might be thrown in. Both of these qualities are very prominent in the little Horsley star. She loves her work and wants plenty of it. Her power of endurance is remarkable. Only recently she played in three dramas at once, changing off and on at the command of the director, working from early morning until close to the time of the call of the milkman. One of the pictures was in five reels and the other two, two reels each.

Starting with the release of "The Soul's Cycle" Miss Gibson became a star. She has followed this up with wonderful portrayals of many varieties and during the months of production she has risked her life not once, but many times while performing in jungle scenes or out on the water. She is willing at all times and through her beautiful disposition and personality has won a place in the heart of all who know her. That she has an enormous screen following is very evident when a glance is taken at her weekly mailing list.

* * * * *

May 20, 1917
NEW YORK TELEGRAPH

Christie Signs Margaret Gibson

Margaret Gibson, formerly of the Horsely studios, and lately with the Christie Comedy company, has signed a long term contract with the latter company and will be featured in a series of two-reel comedies.

* * * * *

[Entry in the 1918 Motion Picture Studio Directory]

GIBSON, Margaret; b. Colorado Springs, Colo., 1896; educ. there and Denver; stage career, Pantages Circuit, with Lorch Stock Co., Denver, 2 yrs.; screen career, Universal ("Public Approval"), Horsley ("Could a Man Do More?"

"Destiny's Boomerang," "Fate's Decision," "Good-for-Nurthin' Brat,"
"Highlights and Shadows," "Jungle Outcasts"), Fox ("Island of Desire," "The
Island of Destiny"), Christie ("With the Mummie's Help," "The Fourteenth
Man," "The Milky Way," "A Lucky Slip," "He Fell on the Beach," "Local Color,"
"Skirts," "When Clubs Were Trumps"); rides, swims, drives. Hght., 5, 1;
wght, 110; golden brown hair, blue eyes.

* * * * *

May 11, 1919
NEW YORK TELEGRAPH

Fay Tincher, Eddie Barry, Patricia Palmer, Harry Depp and Katherine
Lewis will be featured in the cast of "Rowdy Ann." [This short comedy is
available on home video on the "Funny Girls" tape, volume 3 of the Slapstick
Encyclopedia, available from Kino Video. Patricia Palmer is on screen for
nearly four minutes, portraying one of the heroine's college roommates.]

* * * * *

November 20, 1920
MOVING PICTURE WORLD

Patricia Palmer back in Comedies

Patricia Palmer, whom we used to see in many Christie Comedies, is back
in the fold at Christie's Hollywood fun emporium and will be seen in some new
comedies to be directed by Al Christie, Frederic Sullivan and James Clemens,
alternately. Miss Palmer dropped out of Christie's several months ago to head
a feature cast in a six-reel drama, and has been at the heavier stuff ever
since.

* * * * *

[Entry in the 1921 Motion Picture Studio Directory]

PALMER, Patricia; b. San Francisco, Calif.; educ. there; stage career, child parts for several yrs.; screen career, 2 yrs., with Vitagraph for one yr., starring in two-reel O. Henry and Wolfville stories, ("The Canyon Hold-Up," "The Rose of Wolfville"), with W. S. Hart in "The Money Corral," and "Dan Kurrie's Inning " ["Sand"], featured in Christie comedies, Para-Art ("Sand"), Educational ("His Better Half," "Mixed Bedrooms," "Turkey Dressing"), Schlesinger ("Things Men Do"), Home ad., Melrose Hotel, 120 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles, Calif.

* * * * *

August 19, 1922

CAMERA!

Patricia Palmer begins work with the Ranger Productions at the Long Beach studios on completion of her present Lasky engagement.

* * * * *

[Entry in the 1923-4 Motion Picture Studio Directory]

PALMER, Patricia; b. San Francisco, Calif.; educ. Calif. and Colo.; stage experience, vaud. and stock; screen experience, 8 yrs., Christie, Vitagraph, Paramount ("The Cowboy and the Lady," "Mr. Billings Spends His Dime"), Cyrus J. Williams Prod. ("Things Men Do"), American ("The Web of the Law," "The Two Hellions"). Hght. 5, 1; wght, 110; golden brown hair, dark blue eyes. Home ad. 2324 Beachwood Dr.; phone Hollywood, Calif., 436-130.

* * * * *

[Entry in the 1927 Motion Picture News Booking Guide and Studio Directory]

PALMER, Patricia; b. San Francisco, Cal. "Naughty Nanette" (FBO), Hght. 5, 1; wght. 100; golden brown hair; dark blue eyes.

* * * * *

[Entry in the 1930 Motion Picture Almanac]

PALMER, Patricia: has appeared in (1929) "Little Savage," Radio Pictures.

Commentary by Bruce Long

Let us assume, for the sake of armchair speculation, that Margaret Gibson's confession to Taylor's murder on her deathbed was totally true and accurate, the true solution to Taylor's murder.

It would appear that the murder motive would probably either stem from events which took place shortly before the murder, or else from events in 1914, when Taylor and Gibson were acting in films together.

If the murder motive stems from events which took place shortly before the murder, then the motive appears totally lost to history, as there was no known association of Taylor and Gibson/Palmer during that time. Newspapers were speculating wildly about the cause of Taylor's murder, but Gibson/Palmer's name was never mentioned, and no contemporary items refer to any association with Taylor after 1914. Gibson/Palmer was in Los Angeles at the time of the Taylor murder, but so were countless others.

So, let's look at 1914. Taylor was with Vitagraph for six months in 1913-14, and Margaret Gibson was at Vitagraph during that same time. They acted opposite each other in four films, and during those six months they were undoubtedly in additional contact with each other around the Vitagraph lot in Santa Monica, even when working on different films.

Perhaps during that six-month association, Margaret Gibson became totally infatuated with Taylor (just as Mary Miles Minter was later to become), and Taylor rejected her--even though Gibson was a bigger star than

Taylor at that time. Perhaps Gibson never got over his rejection and became increasingly obsessed with Taylor in the subsequent years. As she watched Taylor's career and prestige climb, and her own career decline, perhaps her resentment of Taylor's rejection grew stronger and stronger. (Must I go bound, and you so free?) Finally, on February 1, 1922, she took action against him.

The film "Rounding Up The Law" was released in April 1922, so it must have been in production around the time of the Taylor murder. Patricia Palmer was leading lady in that western film, which starred Big Boy Williams. (The film is available on video from Video Yesteryear.) One scene in the film was the type of scene that would soon disappear from American movies for the next 40 years, banned by the Hays Office. It involves Palmer in the arms of a lecherous villain; he is manhandling her and she is wrestling with him in an attempt to free herself from his embrace. The scene is directed very vigorously. Surprisingly, the hero does not arrive in time to rescue her; she finally uses a gun and saves herself. Perhaps acting in this scene served as a catalyst, enabling her to finally kill Taylor and free herself from the obsession. All purely theoretical, but it is a remotely possible explanation as to why she finally took action, eight years after they worked together.

Fact: In the two years prior to the murder, Patricia Palmer had been acting in short comedies and features for minor film companies like Aywon, Schlesinger, Educational, Christie. But in the year following the Taylor murder, she was given roles in two films at Hollywood's top studio: Famous Players-Lasky (Paramount).

Was it just a coincidence? Or did someone at Paramount give Palmer those film jobs because he knew the truth and wanted to keep the scandal quiet? But how would someone at Paramount have known the truth? Consider: Paramount studio manager Charles Eyton was on the murder scene early on the morning of February 2, 1922. It is known that he removed letters written to Taylor by Mabel Normand and Mary Miles Minter. Perhaps he also removed correspondence written to Taylor by Patricia Palmer--correspondence which,

unlike Normand's innocent joshing letters or Minter's childish love notes, contained threats from a fixated actress who was obsessed with Taylor. (If I can't have you, no one will.) Eyton would have to cover it up to prevent additional damage to the film industry: destroy the Palmer correspondence, and give her a few jobs to help her recover. What's done is done.

As far as the movie industry was concerned, the worst possible outcome of the Taylor case would be if Taylor's killer were revealed to be a screen actor or actress--particularly someone who had been acting in movies for many years--because that would cause the public to feel betrayed and turn away from the box office (as happened in the Arbuckle case), and would increase the power of those who were attacking the immorality of the movies.

In any event, the theory that Margaret Gibson a.k.a. Patricia Palmer killed Taylor is a worthy chapter to the history of the Taylor case.

Many thanks to Bill Cappello, Billy Doyle, Annette D'Agostino, Sally Dumaux, Joe Moore and Raphael Long, for providing some background items. If anyone has more contemporary articles on Gibson/Palmer, please pass them along. Additional space may be devoted to her in a future issue of TAYLOROLOGY.

Back issues of Taylorology are available on the Web at any of the following:

<http://www.angelfire.com/az/Taylorology/>
<http://www.etext.org/Zines/ASCII/Taylorology/>
<http://www.silent-movies.com/Taylorology/>

Full text searches of back issues can be done at <http://www.etext.org/Zines/> or at <http://www.silent-movies.com/search.html>. For more information about Taylor, see

WILLIAM DESMOND TAYLOR: A DOSSIER (Scarecrow Press, 1991)

* T A Y L O R O L O G Y *
* A Continuing Exploration of the Life and Death of William Desmond Taylor *
* *
* Issue 85 -- January 2000 Editor: Bruce Long *
* TAYLOROLOGY may be freely distributed *

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What is TAYLOROLOGY?

TAYLOROLOGY is a newsletter focusing on the life and death of William Desmond Taylor, a top Paramount film director in early Hollywood who was shot to death on February 1, 1922. His unsolved murder was one of Hollywood's major scandals. This newsletter will deal with: (a) The facts of Taylor's life; (b) The facts and rumors of Taylor's murder; (c) The impact of the Taylor murder on Hollywood and the nation; (d) Taylor's associates and the Hollywood silent film industry in which Taylor worked. Primary emphasis will be given toward reprinting, referencing and analyzing source material, and sifting it for accuracy.

James Bean's Theory Regarding Taylor's Killer

Most of the detectives involved in the investigation of the Taylor case thought the killer was either Sands or Shelby (or someone acting for Shelby, like Stockdale). One detective with a completely different viewpoint was James F. Bean, who gave the following interview on the 25th anniversary of Taylor's murder.

* * * * *

February 1, 1947

LOS ANGELES HERALD-EXPRESS

...An old-time police detective, James F. Bean, long since retired, worked on the case painstakingly. He had the most prosaic theory of them all as to how Taylor met death. Because it was prosaic, it never received much publicity. He said:

"I believe and always will believe that a burglar killed Taylor. He was known as the 'Dinner Time Thief' because he always stole between 5:30 p.m. and 7 p.m., when residents of the Westlake district were out eating. I checked the police records, which disclosed that this thief had committed about 25 burglaries in the area surrounding the Taylor home during the year prior to the director's slaying.

"Immediately after the murder of Taylor this burglar ceased operating.

"...Taylor was a courageous man. His friends testified to that. I reasoned at the time that burglar, probably aware that Taylor lived alone, was watching the house. He saw the director and Miss Normand walk out to her car. He figured they were going to dinner. It was his custom to wait until victims left their homes and then quickly go in and loot them. I reasoned that the prowler, intent on a fast clean-up, saw Taylor and Miss Normand leave, then he entered... He was busy looting when Taylor came back and confronted him.

"In my mind's eye, I can see the burglar and Taylor facing each other, the thief telling the director to hold up his hands and sit down. Contemptuously and foolhardedly, I can see Taylor grab the small, strait

backed chair with the intention of hitting the intruder over the head with it. The chair came aloft and as Taylor's body half turned to deliver the blow, the thief stepped back and fired... Naturally, Taylor died instantly.

"In my opinion, the Taylor murder will never be solved unless the guilty person confesses on his or her deathbed, an unlikely prospect, but I still believe that a prowler fired the fatal shot and my guess is as good as anyone's."

Rumors, "Solutions," and Strange Reports

The following is a selection of rumors and strange reports pertaining to the Taylor case.

* * * * *

The 1951 movie "The Hollywood Story" was very loosely based on the Taylor murder case. Actor Elmo Lincoln reportedly confided to a visitor to the movie set that actor Art Acord was the person who had really killed Taylor.

* * * * *

Noted film historian DeWitt Bodeen researched the Taylor case and planned a nonfiction book on it, but it was never published. Instead, Bodeen turned his research into a thinly-veiled fictionalization of the Taylor case, THIRTEEN CASTLE WALK (Pyramid Books, 1975). The solution presented in that book is as follows: Supposedly, Taylor had a homosexual relationship with Jack Pickford, and Taylor infected Jack Pickford with syphilis. Jack

Pickford in turn infected his wife Olive Thomas, who committed suicide after learning she had contracted the disease. Jack Pickford blamed Taylor for having been the cause of his wife's suicide, and murdered Taylor in revenge.

* * * * *

October 26, 1929
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Taylor Murder Has Echo

Echoes of the William Desmond Taylor murder case of 1922 yesterday clamored for the attention of officers in the investigation into the mysterious slaying of Earl Boruff, 41-year-old Long Beach detective, who was found dying, fatally wounded by his own revolver, on the outskirts of Long Beach early on the morning of the 18th inst.

This new phase of the Boruff case was revealed in a confidential report of Long Beach police officers who made the preliminary investigation of the case, turned over yesterday to Capt. William J. Bright, chief of Sheriff Traeger's homicide investigation detail.

Boruff, the report states, a few months ago confided to a friend that he knew more about the William Desmond Taylor murder case than any other person in Southern California, and would have solved it if he had not been removed from the inquiry and ordered to "lay off." At the time he was investigating the Taylor case, Boruff was working for the Department of Justice, according to officers.

The detective further stated that should the identity of Taylor's slayers become known and the case cleared up, it would rock the nation from San Francisco to Washington, D.C.

The conversation in which Boruff related these intimations occurred on or about June 5, last, according to the friend who gave the information to Long Beach officers.

Investigators also have found that Boruff, about two weeks before he was

killed, expressed fear for his life but never mentioned who his enemies were. At that time he borrowed a revolver and for the first time in many months carried the weapon with him at all times.

When he was found dying a few feet from his coupe on East Anaheim street, his gun was lying by his side with three exploded shells in the chambers. Later investigators found the man's pocketbook beneath a bridge one mile away, and this discovery caused the suicide theory to be discarded completely.

* * * * *

One of the detectives who investigated the Taylor murder right from the start was Jesse Winn. He wrote about the case in 1937, and stated: "Only a few months ago, a war veteran came to the office of District Attorney Fitts with what he considered irrefutable proof that Taylor had not been killed at all! The body found in his apartment and recognized by scores of men and women, this man insisted, was really that of Taylor's brother--the director having staged his own "murder" in order to disappear from society forever." [FRONT PAGE DETECTIVE, June 1937].

* * * * *

In January 1930, three separate individuals made statements implicating Mabel Normand in Taylor's murder: (1) Henry Peavey, Taylor's ex-servant, (2) Otis Heffner, ex-convict, and (3) Vincent Clark, editor of the PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER. Heffner's statement was totally discredited (see TAYLOROLOGY 50). Peavey's statement indicated that an argument had taken place between Taylor and Normand during their last visit, and that a telephone call to Taylor's home at 7:30 had gone unanswered (see TAYLOROLOGY 69). Clark's statement was never made public, but his wire to Fitts stated: "Information obtained by me and given to the district attorney's office December 19, 1922, checks in detail with recent disclosures carried in press

relating to Taylor murder case. My statement should be on file. Have acknowledgment receipt in my possession signed by Robert F. Herron, Woolwine's private secretary. Can repeat statement if needed. If no more assistance needed from me will release story to press."

Herron was still a member of Fitts' staff and remembered taking a statement from Clark, but it could not be located. After a conference with the Philadelphia district attorney, Clark announced that he would make no further statement except to an agent of Fitts, and nothing further was mentioned in public regarding the contents of Clark's statement.

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On March 24, 1923, the cover of MOVIE WEEKLY asked, "Did Movie Ku Klux Kill Wm. D. Taylor?" Inside, the article by T. Howard Kelly speculated that the Ku Klux Klan, or some similar secret organization, may have been responsible for the murders of William D. Taylor and actress Fritzie Mann. A subsequent article appeared in the May 5, 1923 issue of MOVIE WEEKLY: "Movie Weekly Writer is Threatened by Ku Klux Klan." Writer T. Howard Kelly revealed that after the publication of the first article he received two phone calls and an anonymous letter. The first phone call was a man's voice, stating: "Are you going to keep your mouth shut about the K. K. K. in the movies? If not you go the way of William Desmond Taylor and Fritzie Mann." The second call was from a woman who asked, "Are you through suggesting that the Ku Klux Klan is at work in the movies?" Kelly replied, "I am not." The woman then stated, "Then you can blame yourself for whatever happens to you," and hung up. The anonymous letter was signed "K.K.K." and stated verbatim: "There is many of that movie actors and actresses they will go to meet Mr. William Desmond Taylor and Fritzie Mann if they don't change the system of them live. But if you don't keep your mouth enclose and leave the Klan alone you'll be sorry. Now is up to you..." [sic]

* * * * *

February 16, 1922

LOS ANGELES EXPRESS

The burning love of a film idol for his wife, which first drove him into frenzies of despair and finally to murder, was whispered about the Hall of Records today as the real solution of the mystery surrounding the death of William D. Taylor.

And on the strength of this story a state-wide search has been instituted for the actor, formerly associated with one of the largest film producing organizations in Southern California, and for his wife. The woman is said by the authorities to still be in the vicinity of Los Angeles. The man, it is feared, has fled.

According to information in the hands of the authorities, the man in question was called to the East in connection with the production of a picture about five months ago. He was absent for two months. During that period, it is asserted, his wife, who also acts before the camera, was seen several times with Taylor.

Whether or not this man, consumed by the fires of jealousy, spied upon his wife and, believing her to be infatuated with Taylor, killed him, is not publicly known. Investigators decline to discuss the case, but it is indicated that the details of the situation are in their possession and they are of sufficient importance to warrant a widespread investigation.

* * * * *

February 17, 1922

LOS ANGELES RECORD

The theory that Taylor was slain for money was revived Friday when Mrs. J. M. Berger, income tax expert, reported that the film director had a large roll of bills in his possession when she talked to him at 4 o'clock on the afternoon of the day he was murdered. W. T. Hammond, cashier at the First National Bank, where Taylor kept his accounts, said that the director made no

deposit that day.

When found murdered Taylor had a flat wad of bills, amounting to \$70 in a pocket. Mrs. Berger thinks the roll she saw was much larger than this.

Following her statement Friday the theory was advanced that Taylor was killed by a blackmailer after he had given the man the roll of bills. After the crime the slayer could have departed hastily, taking with him the money he received from Taylor, but not disturbing the money and jewelry on his person.

* * * * *

February 25, 1922

NEW YORK NEWS

Los Angeles, Feb. 24--..A new Tong war is brooding in Ferguson Alley, this city's Chinatown, as the result of the murder of William Desmond Taylor, the Hollywood film director so mysteriously shot down in his bungalow the night of February 1 just after Mabel Normand, his favorite screen beauty, had bidden him good-by.

Lim Kee, one of the alley's wealthiest merchants, has been killed, riddled with bullets fired by Tong men, on the very eve of his marriage to a Chinatown belle. Chinatown detectives who understand something of the dark and strange ways of Oriental circles hereabout say that Kee was credited with knowing too much about the murder of Taylor. He was a recognized enemy of another Chinaman now thought to be implicated in the murder.

* * * * *

May 13, 1937

LOS ANGELES EXAMINER

...The other development, revealed by District Attorney Buron Fitts and his aides, was the commencement of a detailed search for a woman, who, a year ago, attempted to supply authorities with highly important information

concerning the slaying of the noted film director, but, who it was said, was rebuffed because officials "weren't interested" in the case at the time.

The woman, it was revealed, approached Capt. Jack Southard of the District Attorney's office with information that she had overheard a declaration at a dinner party, wherein one of the persons closely acquainted with Taylor at the time of his mysterious death allegedly said, in effect, "I took care of Taylor and I'll take care of anyone else who tries to interfere with my affairs as he did."

Southard introduced the woman to a superior official, but the latter declared there was no investigation pending, and that he did not care to pursue the new lead.

William Desmond Taylor's Injuries

The following contemporary items relate to Taylor's injuries during the years he worked in Hollywood.

* * * * *

February 6, 1915

VARIETY

William D. Taylor, Favorite Players director, was struck by an automobile in Los Angeles and slightly injured.

* * * * *

April 9, 1915

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

William D. Taylor, producer of Favorite Players' pictures and who is

busy preparing for the new five-reel photoplay adapted from the novel, "Mr. Grex of Monte Carlo," by E. Phillips Oppenheim came near to being knocked out on Sunday. Taylor, with the property man and scene painter was looking through some sets, and a fourteen foot plank became loose and hit Taylor on the head. He says he had no idea he possessed such a hard skull and beyond a bad headache he suffered little injury. The property man and scene painter were more frightened than Taylor was hurt they aver.

* * * * *

August 1, 1915
NEW YORK TELEGRAPH

[after an item telling of director B. Reaves Eason receiving an electrical shock]
...It seems that Eason wasn't alone in his electrical experiences. Just a few days ago W. D. Taylor, director of "The Diamond From The Sky," ran into a similar surprise. The members of the company were at work in an underground tunnel, when Taylor, walking in advance of his forces, stepped right on a charged wire which was not covered. He was thrown several feet in the air and badly burned.

* * * * *

February 26, 1916
NEW YORK DRAMATIC MIRROR

Director William Taylor lost the top of his thumb last week in opening a prop can at the Morosco studio. Seven stitches were required in the treatment of the injured digit.

April 1, 1916
NEW YORK CLIPPER

William D. Taylor, the Pallas producer, who is just finishing up his

photoplay version of a story by George Beban and with that artist starred, has been suffering from a poisoned hand, which threatened for a time to be serious. He still carries his arm in a sling.

* * * * *

December 18, 1920

EXHIBITOR'S TRADE REVIEW

With the statement of a prominent Los Angeles eye specialist that William D. Taylor, the noted director, may have to retire from studio activity because of deterioration of vision from ultra-violet ray action, a menace to film workers far more dangerous than klieg-eyes, is disclosed.

Other prominent individuals working before and behind the motion camera may be forced to retire if the pigment of the eyes in each case is susceptible to the ghastly rays of the mercury-vapor lamps now used in many studios. The disorder evidences itself in a dull throbbing of the eye after a day's work under these lights, actors say.

With the development and extensive use of "back lighting" the menace extends to those outside the camera range as well as those directly under the lights. Some eyes are so constituted that the action of the ultra-violet rays is not fatal to the pigment, surgeons state.

In other cases, permanent impairment of vision may result.

William D. Taylor, who has achieved the doubtful distinction of being first to suffer the yet unnamed disorder, is working on future stories in order to rest his eyes from the mercury lights. Because of the switch in plans, Cosmo Hamilton's original screen story will not be filmed next, as previously announced.

* * * * *

November 7, 1921
LOS ANGELES EXPRESS

William D. Taylor, working at night on the roof tops of New York (actually the Lasky studio) lost his footing on a ledge and fell 15 feet. His left arm and leg were severely bruised, but the company didn't get five minutes' vacation on that account.

Why Margaret Gibson Changed her Screen Name

From 1912 to 1917 Margaret Gibson acted in many films, building her reputation on screen and within the movie industry. Then, in 1918, she quietly changed her screen name to Patricia Palmer, and the fan magazines never hinted that Patricia Palmer and Margaret Gibson were the same person. So why the name change? There certainly were other instances of actresses changing their screen names, but this generally occurred when the first career was going nowhere. Margaret Gibson, on the other hand, had been in the hit movie "The Coward." Why start over as someone else? The answer can be deduced from the following clippings; once this incident became public, she clearly had no choice: Given the moral climate of the time, if she wished to continue working before the movie camera, she would have to change her identity and start over. So she did, and her "Patricia Palmer" career was much more subdued, with no interviews appearing in fan magazines. [Many thanks to Richard Rosenberg for providing the following clippings. If anyone will provide other clippings with additional information pertaining to this incident, we will reprint them also.]

* * * * *

August 26, 1917
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Star Comedienne Caught in a Raid

Margaret Gibson, Picture Actress, Arrested

Margaret Gibson, moving picture comedy star, was arrested late yesterday afternoon and lodged in the City Jail following a raid conducted by Officers Trebilcock and Douglas and Federal Agent Putnam upon two houses in Commercial Street.

Miss Gibson was taken into custody at No. 432 1/2 Commercial Street, where eleven others also were placed under arrest. They gave the names of Ruth Slauson, Pearl Young, Ralph Rodriguez, Robert Rodriguez, F. Costillo, S. Eshikawa, M. T. Hashimoto, C. Ito, T. Soneda and I. Kanba. Ralph Rodriguez was charged with a felony, the charges against him being suspicion of keeping his wife in a disorderly house, and the others were booked on charges of vagrancy and violation of the rooming-house ordinance.

The arrest and charges against Miss Gibson grow out of her presence in a place the officers believed to be a house of ill fame. According to the police a young woman closely answering the film star's description was known to enter the place regularly in the past few days.

Miss Gibson vehemently denied the charges and called her arrest ridiculous. According to her story, she met Pearl Young, whom she knew for some time and with whom she had worked in pictures, and was invited to the house to see some "local color" and taste some Spanish dishes. She was in the room with Miss Young and Mrs. Rodriguez when the police broke into the house and placed them under arrest, she declared. After spending two hours in the City Jail, Miss Gibson was released on \$250 bail.

The police are puzzled by the conflicting details and stories told by the different prisoners taken in the raid, and further investigation into the affair will be made, they say.

The second raid was made on a house at No. 444 1/2 Commercial Street, where the prisoners, four of them men, were taken. Charges of vagrancy, rooming-house ordinance violation, and possession of opium were made against

them.

* * * * *

August 28, 1917
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Former Film Star will be Tried as a Vagrant

Margaret Gibson, former motion-picture star, who was arrested last Saturday afternoon in a raid on an alleged house of ill fame at No. 432 1/2 Commercial Street by Officers Trebilcock and Douglas, was yesterday arraigned before Police Judge White on a charge of lewdness. Her case was set for trial October 12. Miss Gibson pleaded not guilty and demanded a jury trial. She is at liberty on \$250 bail.

She and three other women were arrested Saturday evening after two houses--one at No. 442 1/2 Commercial Street and the other at No. 432 1/2--had been under surveillance for several days. According to the police, no less than seventy-one Japanese entered the two buildings in three hours Saturday afternoon a week ago.

Joe Peppia, said to be an opium smuggler and well known to the police, was arrested yesterday and taken before Police Judge White by Officers Trebilcock and Douglas. He was remanded to jail in default of \$250 bail. He also is charged with lewdness, and the police suspect him of having some connection with Miss Gibson's case. He will be tried October 27.

S. Echikima, M. T. Hashimoto, T. Sondad and K. Fugi, Japanese, arrested in the Commercial Street raid, pleaded guilty to resorting to a house of ill fame and were fined \$25 each by Justice White yesterday.

Miss Pearl Young and Miss Ruth Slauson, also arrested in the raid, were held for trial before Police Judge Chesebro in the women's court. Miss Young will be tried September 30 and Miss Slauson September 29.

Lola Rieves, also arrested in the raid, was charged with conducting a

disorderly house. She pleaded not guilty and asked for a jury trial, which will be given her September 25. Robert Rodriguez, charged with vagrancy, will be tried September 29, as will E. Nodena and Manuel Vega, similarly charged.

Complaints charging Ralph and Frank Rodriguez with keeping their wives in disorderly houses probably will be sworn to by the arresting officers today.

* * * * *

September 14, 1917
LOS ANGELES HERALD

The costume worn by Miss Margaret Gibson, a pretty actress, when she was found in a house on Commercial Street during a police raid, was depicted with some detail today, when the case was heard before a jury of seven women and five men in Judge Chesbro's court.

In addition to the seven women on the jury, Miss Gibson faced another of her own sex in the person of Miss Margaret Gardner, the prosecuting attorney.

Society people and motion picture actors, mingled with the residents of the Commercial Street district in the court room.

Miss Gibson declares she was in the house to obtain "atmosphere" for a picture in which she is about to appear. The police charge against her at the time of the raid was vagrancy, and they attempted today to prove that she was in a place of disorderly repute.

As to the costume, it was asserted that Miss Gibson was clad principally in a kimona and that she wore shoes and socks, not stockings.

Miss Gibson gave her age as 22, but she has the appearance of a girl of 16.

She showed no emotion and little interest in court today while she was accused of having been found with five Japanese and white men in the Commercial Street house.

Behind her sat her mother, interestedly following every detail of the

prosecution.

Special Officer Siebentree was first called to the witness stand. He told of having gone to the Commercial Street rooming house August 25. While there he declared he saw Miss Gibson dressed only in a kimona, made apron fashion, and wearing socks and shoes. He declared there were five Japanese, two other white women and several white men in the room.

When Miss Gibson was taken in custody Siebentree declared she asked time to change her clothes.

The greatest part of the trial was given over to lengthy arguments between Miss Margaret Gardner, the prosecutor, and the counsel for the defense.

At one instance of an objection to the introduction of testimony, Miss Gardener jumped to her feet and exclaimed: "If you are slurring my professional honor, you can retract at once." Only interference on the part of Judge Cheseboro prevented a length altercation.

Police Officer Douglas was the only other witness called during the forenoon. He told of having gone to the rooming house. The jury was dismissed until 2:15 o'clock in the afternoon, when the case was again called and again the courtroom was crowded.

The jury sworn in was comprised of Mildred A. Bengel, Richard A. Collins, Emma Boyd, Alma E. Dewey, W. E. Dunham, Lena Filtner, Ann B. Stevenson, William J. Watson, J. H. Hayes, Crista L. Molten, Sallie D. Richards and Conrad Ccherer.

* * * * *

September 19, 1917
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Woman Lawyer Nettles Court

[A portion of this clipping was torn at one edge; possible missing words are indicated by braces.]

The climax in the trial of Margaret Gibson, charged with immoral conduct, came late yesterday afternoon, when Police Judge Chesebro pointed his finger at Margaret Gardner, deputy city prosecutor, and exclaimed:

"Miss Gardner, if you don't sit down immediately and proceed with the cross-examination of the witness I shall fine you for contempt of court!"

The young woman stood firm and resolute, with her hands on her hips, for a breathless twenty seconds, and then she dropped into her chair. The judge issued his ultimatum after having cautioned Miss Gardner attempts to establish the charge that No. 432 1/2 Commercial Street is a house of ill-repute, and after having warned her to not stand and smile at him.

A surprise was thrown into the defense when the prosecuting attorney introduced as a witness Miss Ruth Slauson, whom Police Judge White had sentenced to ninety days in jail for having frequented the house in which Miss Gibson was arrested. When Miss Slauson took the stand, petite and fearful, she had considerable trouble in finding her voice. She broke down and wept so copiously that she was excused from the stand after Frank Dominguez had severely arraigned her in an effort to impeach her testimony. He succeeded in getting her to admit that she testified against herself and Miss Gibson yesterday in spite of the fact that at her own trial she had said, he alleged, that she never had committed an immoral act at the house in question and didn't know of anybody who had.

Yesterday, however, she said she saw Miss Gibson at the Commercial Street address on August 25. This is a part of her story:

"I met Miss Gibson in the hall of the rooming-house at No. 432 1/2 Commercial Street while I was working there. We sat on chairs in the hall. Japanese men entered the hall. They would either tap us on the shoulder or motion to us, and we would accompany them to a room. The afternoon I refer to I sat in the hall about fifteen minutes and then went to a room. Miss Gibson [was] there about half an hour and [then] went to a room. In each c[ase she] went with Japanese men. I re[mained] in my room from five to fifteen minutes, but I can't say how long [Miss] Gibson remained in a room w[i]th each] Japanese man, because we di[d not] go in and come out at the

[same] time."

Attorney Dominguez attempted to impeach the testimony of Officer E. Trebilcock. The latter said that on the night of the raid he saw Margaret Gibson in the left hall, wearing a loose house apron, the top of which was quite low and the bottom of which dropped scarcely below her knees. He said she told Officer Allison she was a picture star seeking local color, and that she begged to be turned loose because she had been there only that one time. He said she reached over and tried to kiss Allison. Officer Trebilcock said, that Miss Gibson came over and also tried to kiss him, while the landlord, Pearl Young, Ruth Slauson and others were in the room, and that he told her to go away and not attempt to "love him up."

L. E. Larronde, who occupied the house at No. 448 Commercial Street believed he had seen Miss Gibson enter the house ten or fifteen different times.

Miss Gibson appeared in the courtroom yesterday with her mother and a young man of about her own age. During intermissions she was the center of a bevy of young women. The trial is largely attended.

* * * * *

September 19, 1917

LOS ANGELES HERALD

Somebody stole a kiss from Miss Margaret Gibson when she was arrested in a Commercial Street rooming house, according to testimony today at the trial of Miss Gibson, a bewitching actress, who is technically charged with vagrancy.

Miss Gibson says the man who purloined the dainty osculation was a police officer.

In addition she says the officer told her she was "a very pretty girl."

The story of the kiss was told when Miss Gibson went on the stand in Judge Chesebro's court, and with flashing eyes denied the statements of various witnesses for the prosecution that she was a visitor at the

Commercial Street house for the purpose of receiving attentions from men.

The actress defiantly denied that she had been the object of ardent courtship by Japanese, as was testified by Miss Ruth Slauson, who also was arrested in the raid.

Gowned in a dark green suit, her hair forming a halo beneath a black hat, the actress today told of her life at the different studios and of how she came to be in the rooming house on Commercial Street.

"Since I was twelve years old," she said, "I have been engaged in the show business. My father left my mother at that time and I have been her only support since."

Regarding the stolen kiss, Miss Gibson said Police Officer Allison leaned over and kissed her while they were waiting for the police patrol, after first remarking that she was an "unusually pretty girl to be found in such a place."

The little actress who gave her age as twenty-three but who looks like a school girl, told of having first gone to the Commercial Street house.

She declared a Spanish girl had taken her there to visit a Mr. and Mrs. Rodriquez. Then when she saw the character of the place she declared it interested her and she went three more times to study it, hoping it would help her in her film work.

Under a severe cross-examination Miss Gibson held to her own. She will be recalled to the witness stand later and will again face Miss Margaret Gardener, the prosecutor, who is endeavoring to convict her on the charge of vagrancy.

The statement that she wore a kimona when she was arrested indignantly denied by Miss Gibson.

Attorneys Dominguez, Cohen and Willis, who are representing Miss Gibson, placed motion picture men and women on the stand this morning, including Mr. and Mrs. Louis M. Morrison, all of whom testified to the good character of the film actress...

* * * * *

September 20, 1917
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Margaret Gibson found Not Guilty

After deliberating fifteen minutes and taking two ballots, the jury in the case of Miss Margaret Gibson, a motion-picture actress, charged with lewd and immoral conduct, returned a verdict last evening of not guilty.

The case went to the jury at 5 o'clock. On the first ballot the jury was ten to two for acquittal, but the next ballot was unanimously in favor of the young woman's acquittal. The case was tried before Police Judge Chesebro in the women's court in Normal Hill Center. It began Friday.

Miss Gibson was arrested, with Pearl Young and Ruth Slauson, at a rooming-house on Commercial Street in August. All three of the young women were charged with immoral conduct. Miss Slauson was sentenced by Police Judge White to serve ninety days in jail. Miss Gibson demanded a jury trial and was acquitted by the jury, and Miss Young has not yet had her trial.

On the witness stand yesterday Miss Gibson stated that she is 23 years of age. She explained her presence at the rooming-house, which Japanese men are alleged to patronize, by stating that she was getting local color in order to play a lead in a vaudeville sketch.

Margaret Gibson Arrested for Extortion

In 1923 Margaret Gibson was arrested again, on a much more serious charge.

* * * * *

November 3, 1923
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Screen Star Faces Judge

Contractor Charges Patricia Palmer with Extortion After Asserted Tijuana Trip

Margaret Gibson, known as Patricia Palmer in the films, where she attained prominence, was arraigned late yesterday before United States Commissioner Stephen G. Long on a charge of violating Section 145 of the Federal Criminal Code. Bond was set at \$2500, which she had failed to make late yesterday, and the preliminary hearing announced for the 8th inst.

The victim of the asserted extortion is George W. Lasher, electrical contractor of Burbank, who told officers that he paid the young woman \$1155 to avoid prosecution for asserted violation of the Mann Act.

According to the Department of Justice Agent-in-Charge Wheeler, Miss Palmer is connected with Don Osborne and Rose Putnam, convicted blackmailers, who pleaded guilty last Tuesday in Cincinnati to extorting \$10,000 from John L. Bushnell, Ohio banker.

Miss Palmer was arrested at her home, 2324 North Beachwood Drive, yesterday morning by Detective Lieutenants Reed and Shafer, Investigator Charles Reimer of the District Attorney's office, and Department of Justice agents, who have been working on the investigation for several weeks.

On last Saturday Miss Palmer was said to have married Arthur McGinnis at Santa Ana. She gained the limelight several years ago when, under the name of Margaret Gibson, she was arrested in a raid on a Japanese rooming-house. She was charged with vagrancy, but was acquitted of the charge in Police Court.

For the last several years Miss Palmer has played in numerous motion-picture productions and has recently been working at the Lasky studio. She formerly played with Louise Glaum, and her picture, "Into the Light," was exhibited in a Broadway Theater a few weeks ago.

Last January Miss Palmer sold to Osborne, a house a 2575 Beachwood Drive. Many parties were given there with a large attendance of film celebrities, said Wheeler. In the latter part of January, said the officers, Osborne called in Lasher to do electrical work, and on one occasion introduced him to Miss Palmer. A trip to Tijuana followed, Lasher declared, at which time both he and Miss Palmer put up checks for \$1000, making a wager. He said he realized something was wrong and went to Los Angeles, where he stopped payment on the check.

He was later approached by Osborne, he said, who told him it would be best to pay the money. He said Mrs. Ella Gibson, the girl's mother, threatened him with the prosecution on the Mann Act, in taking the girl across the international border to Tijuana.

Her threats followed, he declared, and he paid her sums of \$75, \$800 and \$280 to escape prosecution. This payment forms the basis of the government's charge against the girl, as the Federal statutes declare that "whoever extorts money on the threat of informing of a violation of the law shall be subject to a fine of \$2000 or a sentence of one year, or both."

Miss Palmer was accompanied by her mother at the Federal Building. Her attorney, P. J. Cooney, stated that he would soon have her bail arranged.

"It's a frame-up," said Miss Palmer, in answer to questions concerning the affair. On Osborne and other incidents she was silent.

* * * * *

November 3, 1923

LOS ANGELES EXAMINER

Following the arrest yesterday of Margaret Gibson, pretty actress, known in the films as Patricia Palmer, by Federal agents on a charge of extorting \$1155 from George W. Lasher, wealthy electrical contractor of Burbank, it was learned last night that Miss Gibson is only one of many men and women who are to be taken into custody here and elsewhere as the alleged members of a blackmail ring which has mulcted prominent and wealthy men of more than

\$3,000,000 during the past few years.

Federal, county and local officers have been working on the case for months and it is asserted that other warrants have been issued, but that the names of the persons accused are being kept secret until they are apprehended.

Arresting officers declared she obtained the money by threatening to prosecute Lasher on a "white slave" act charge. She was taken into custody at the home of her mother, Mrs. Ella Gibson, 2324 North Beechwood Drive.

After being questioned by Lucien C. Wheeler of the Department of Justice, and United States Attorney Joe Burke she was arraigned before United States Commissioner Long. He ordered her held under \$2500 bond pending a preliminary hearing on November 8.

Her arrest was said by Federal agents to be an aftermath of the recent expose of a Hollywood blackmailing ring headed by Dan Osborn and Rose Putnam. This pair pleaded guilty and were sentenced in Federal court in Cincinnati last week for extorting \$10,000 from John L. Bushnell, Springfield, Ohio, banker.

The circumstances surrounding the alleged "shaking down" of the Burbank business man have been under investigation since the early part of February, it developed yesterday. After the arrest in Cincinnati of the two blackmailing suspects there, who had formerly lived in Hollywood in a house rented from Miss Palmer, Agent Connelly was sent to Los Angeles by the Department of Justice headquarters at Cincinnati to trace other activities which were credited to the pair.

Connelly worked the case here in collaboration with Agent Meehan of the local Federal office, Police Lieutenants Reed and Shafer, and with Special Investigator Charles Riemer of the District Attorney's office. The actual warrant of arrest was served by Deputy United States Marshal Henry Yonkin. The Federal officials stated that they had delayed action in the matter until every angle of the alleged blackmailing ring had been thoroughly investigated.

Osborn lived in Hollywood at 2575 Beechwood Drive, in a pretty bungalow

he rented from Miss Palmer. According to Federal agents, Lasher was introduced to Miss Palmer several months ago in this house. Later, the two went to Tia Juana in Miss Palmer's automobile.

At the border city a party was staged. A bet was made between Lasher and the picture star, and Lasher signed a check for \$1000. During the course of the festivities, he was administered "knockout drops" by somebody in the party, he told the Federal agents, and when he came to himself he stopped payment on the check.

Mrs. Gibson, mother of the screen luminary, is said to have gone to Lasher and threatened to make trouble for him on the ground that he had taken her daughter across the border with wrongful intentions. It was a short time later, according to Lasher's statements to the Federal men, that the screen star herself declared unless she "came across" she would cause his arrest on a Mann Act charge.

During her arraignment in Commissioner Long's court the pretty film star was tearful and stood with bowed head through the proceedings.

"It's just a put up job, I never took a cent of his money," she sobbed.

She said that she had only met Osborn, the blackmailer, in a business way, and that she had never had any dealings with him except as to renting her house.

"This is simply a matter of personal spite, and they haven't got anything on me at all," she declared, in a tone so low that it could scarcely be heard. She vehemently denied ever threatening to "expose" Lasher unless he provided her with funds.

The screen star's mother was with her throughout the proceedings, as also was the accused star's attorney, Patrick J. Cooney.

Miss Palmer was in trouble once before with the authorities. She was arrested in 1917 by police during a raid on a Commercial Street rooming house and a charge of vagrancy was placed against her. She was acquitted of this charge at the trial. Although she never attained stardom in the films, she has played a number of important roles in various pictures during the last six years.

* * * * *

November 3, 1923

LOS ANGELES HERALD

Miss Margaret Gibson, petite film player, known professionally as Patricia Palmer, was today at liberty on \$2500 bail, following her arrest yesterday, as reported exclusively in The Evening Herald, on a charge of extorting \$1150 from George W. Lasher, wealthy electrical contractor of Burbank, under threat of federal prosecution.

At the same time it became known that Miss Gibson is but one of a number of men and women scheduled for arrest as alleged members of a blackmailing ring declared to have victimized wealthy men of an enormous sum of money during the past few years.

Miss Gibson denied that she had threatened to "expose" Lasher unless he provided her with funds.

"I never took a cent of his money," she declared. "It's just a matter of personal spite."

Her only relations with Don Osborn, convicted in Ohio of blackmailing John L. Bushnell for \$10,000, had to do with the renting of her house to him, she said. The arresting officers stated, however, that Miss Gibson was introduced to Lasher by Osborn, and that the confessed blackmailer later advised the asserted victim to make a settlement with the girl.

Miss Gibson accepted her arrest with a philosophical calmness that was almost startling, officers said.

After accepting service of the warrant at the door, she called to her mother and said:

"Mother, these gentlemen are officers. George Lasher has sworn to some kind of warrant and I'll have to go with them."

"All right," returned the mother, quietly. "Are you going to jail?"

"I suppose so," returned the girl. And she went.

* * * * *

November 9, 1923

LOS ANGELES EXAMINER

Charge Against Girl Dismissed

Ella Margaret Gibson, known to fans of the silver screen as Patricia Palmer, yesterday was freed from a Federal charge accusing her of extorting \$1155 from George W. Lasher, Burbank electrical contractor, on threats to prosecute him under the Mann White Slave Act.

The motion to dismiss the charge was made by Assistant United States Attorney Mark L. Herron, when the preliminary hearing of the screen actress was called before United States Commissioner Long. Insufficiency of evidence was the reason given for dropping the case.

Frank Dominguez, her attorney, stated that rather than force Lasher to give her money, following a trip taken to Tia Juana in Miss Palmer's automobile, Miss Palmer had in fact given Lasher money, and that he had in his possession checks totaling \$600 which the actress had given Lasher.

"This poor girl has lost her job, her mother is seriously ill in bed, and now we are politely informed that it was all a mistake," he thundered.

Commissioner Long said he regretted very much that the matter had gone as far as it had.

[Again, thanks to Richard Rosenberg for providing these clippings. If we obtain other clippings with additional details regarding this incident, they will be reprinted in future issues of TAYLOROLOGY.]

More Thoughts Regarding Margaret Gibson

In TAYLOLOLOGY 84, we speculated on the motive for Margaret Gibson's possible involvement in the Taylor case, speculation which focused on the obsessed-stalker motive. But the above clippings from 1917 and 1923 throw a great deal of light on her character and associates, forcing us to shift our armchair speculation toward the blackmail theory of Taylor's murder. The 1923 clipping strongly indicates that she had a close personal association with a major blackmailer. There were several contemporary rumors that Taylor's killer was a blackmailer.

Shortly before the Taylor murder, perhaps Margaret Gibson had a discussion with Don Osborn regarding likely blackmail subjects, and she suggested they blackmail Taylor; Osborn would threaten to expose him and ruin his career unless he paid big money. What would the basis of the blackmail threat have been? In the aftermath of the Arbuckle scandal, the movie industry was ripe for blackmail threats because it was so highly sensitive to negative publicity. If something strongly negative were publicly revealed about Taylor, who was president of the Moving Picture Director's Association and one of Paramount's top directors, it would have a damaging effect on the industry. And Taylor, as a highly-paid director, would be considered an excellent potential blackmail target.

According to the April 18, 1914 issue of MOVING PICTURE WORLD, Taylor was fired from Vitagraph. He had worked there for six months, and in four of his films he had acted opposite Margaret Gibson. So she was probably aware of the reason for his termination there. If he was fired for having done something "immoral" or illegal (but the studio had never filed legal charges because it didn't want the negative publicity), then that knowledge could form the basis of her blackmail threat.

Or perhaps the threat was based, as on the clipping above, on violation of the Mann Act, or some recent private behavior of Taylor which Gibson had learned about.

It was reported in the press that a man, approximately age 27, had inquired at a local gas station two hours before the murder, asking the location of Taylor's home. (See TAYLOROLOGY 56). Some people think this man,

who was not Shelby or Sands, was the killer, since he was seeking Taylor just before the murder. Yet it seems extremely unlikely that a premeditated murderer would deliberately expose himself to witnesses so near the crime scene. On the other hand, a blackmailer might have no such reluctance, since he was not on a murder mission, but only wanted to have a quiet private discussion with Taylor. But Taylor, when confronted with the blackmail attempt, tried to physically attack the blackmailer, who shot in defense and killed Taylor. Under this scenario, Margaret Gibson would naturally feel responsible for Taylor's death, since it was her suggestion which ultimately led to Taylor's shooting.

In any event, it would be very interesting to determine whether Don Osborn fit the description of the person seen at the gas station, and the person seen by Faith MacLean. That person was about 5'9" tall, much too tall to have been Margaret Gibson (or Charlotte Shelby). But what about Osborn? Should he be added to the gallery of Taylor murder suspects?

On additional thought: During her 1917 trial, "motion picture men and women..., all of whom testified to the good character of the film actress" were placed on the witness stand. Was Taylor one of those who testified? Or, conversely, was he asked to testify but refused, causing resentment on her part?

* * * * *

Robert Birchard has also suggested the following possibilities:

"What about this for a scenario? Mabel's on dope, Gibson and company threaten to spill the beans. It's a safe bet Gibson knew Normand--they had both been employees of the New York Motion Picture Corporation. Mabel uses Bill as an intermediary. She drops off the cash when she comes a calling and leaves before the blackmailer arrives/ or alternatively, she does not drop off the cash. Bill tries to do right by Mabel and tell the blackmailer to piss up a rope/ or alternatively, he has no money to give the shakedown artist. Pow. Brave old Bill ends up in a pile on the floor.

"Or how about this? Gibson tells her pals something about Taylor (or someone else) and they decide to pull a shake down. Gibson goes to Taylor and he buys her off cheap with a studio contract. Her friends are pissed. Margaret/Patricia has gotten hers and they're left holding the bag. Osborn goes to lean on Taylor. Taylor laughs in his face. Margaret's more interested in her career and now that she's under contract she won't squawk and Osborne has no first hand knowledge of anything. Pow. Crafty old Bill ends up in a pile on the floor.

"Or? Bill and Margaret got it on at Vitagraph. She hits the skids and he helps her--changes her name puts her under contract to the studio (or at least gets her on the approved list for casual hires), and "that old feeling" is rekindled in Gibson's breast--but not in Bill's. She pleads her love, Bill turns a deaf ear. Hell hath no fury, etc. Pow. Hard-hearted old Bill ends up in a pile on the floor, and Maggie really did pull the trigger.

"We have the reel six confession. All we have to do is tie it up. Of course, Gibson/Palmer could have been delusional in her old age and been merely one of the many who have confessed to something they didn't do.

"This stuff is good for another 75 years of speculation!"

* * * * *

Last word from ye editor:

The confession alone, if it came from a Jane Doe, would have an extremely low level of probability. But the confessor:

- a. Worked with Taylor for six months.
- b. Had sinister associates, one of whom was a major blackmailer.
- c. Was arrested for extortion stemming from events which took place less than a year after the Taylor murder.
- d. Was given at least two acting roles at Famous Players-Lasky in the year following the murder.

Put it all together with the confession, and the probability rises considerably. (Come on, you Taylorologists out there! Where else does the

Margaret Gibson trail lead?)

Additional Comments on Margaret Gibson

by Ray Long

There are several observations I'd like to make relative to my recent statement regarding Margaret Gibson/Patricia Palmer/Pat Lewis.

I stated that she was interned at Calvary Cemetery. That is incorrect. She was buried at Holy Cross Cemetery near Culver City, California.

While she was very definite in her statement that she "shot and killed William Desmond Taylor," the reason for having to flee the country now appears to relate to a later offense.

I believe I made a false assumption as to the motive for her sudden departure to the Orient in 1934. I assumed she was motivated by the never ending investigation of the crime. There was a constant barrage of media reports, three district attorneys vowing they were about to apprehend the culprit and a procession of grand juries being convened. That may not have been the reason for her flight.

With the revelations subsequent to the publication of Taylorology 84, I now believe that there were other factors motivating her to take that proverbial "slow boat to China."

During her dying monologue, she made several statements which were either incomprehensible, inaudible or I just plain wasn't paying attention. Her words were directed toward my mother, not I. I might speculate that they related to other transgressions. However, that would be pure guesswork on my part.

There is a distinct possibility that she may have been involved in another crime equally heinous to the Taylor affair or possibly charged with

felonies in which she knew she might go to prison. 1934 appears to be a pivotal year in her life. There is something there which cries out for discovery.

It was extremely fortuitous that she found the love of her life upon arrival in Singapore and she married on February 9, 1935.

Whatever occurred in 1934 may very well have been the reason for her living in almost total obscurity after returning to the United States during the fall of 1940. She returned as Mrs. E. E. Lewis not as Patricia Palmer/Margaret Gibson.

She had not planned on returning to the United States. Her letters indicate that she and Elbert Lewis planned on retirement in either South Africa or possibly Australia.

Following her marriage in 1935, she settled down to the idyllic life of a traveling companion to an executive of the Standard Vacuum Oil Company. The couple traveled continuously around the Bay of Bengal in the Indian Ocean from Ceylon, to India, Burma, Straits Settlements and the Island of Java.

In summer of 1940, she developed a serious bladder infection. Treatment was not available in the region. She had to seek medical treatment elsewhere.

Europe was enveloped in war. German surface raider ships were operating on the Indian Ocean and making shipping extremely hazardous. That ruled out both Australia and South Africa. The only remaining option was to return to the United States. They felt the safest route across the Pacific was through Yokohama. They had considered the Pan American Flying Boat through Manila but Mrs. Lewis was afraid of flying.

Upon her return, she underwent surgery twice at Hollywood Hospital performed by a Doctor Branch. Meanwhile Elbert Lewis was killed during the Japanese bombing of the Stan-Vac facility at Penang, Straits Settlements on March 15, 1942. Standard Vacuum, later Mobil Oil, provided her with a small widow's pension until her death in 1964.

Letter from Margaret Gibson's Husband

The following letter from Elbert Lewis was written to his wife shortly before he was killed. The letter is reprinted as originally written, for historical reasons. (The letter is Copyright 2000 by Ray Long, all rights reserved.)

* * * * *

(Postmarked Feb 9, 1942 at Calcutta GPO The notation "almost - last letter - Bombed" Return address on the envelope is Great Eastern Hotel, Calcutta, India.)

Calcutta - February 8, 1942

My Most Precious Patricia:

Tomorrow marks the ending of my seven most happy years and the beginning of, oh, so many more marvelous years, dearest, even though it had to be that we could not share all of them together. At those times you have lived in my thoughts and my dreams of you have been so beautiful and wonderful. I love my darling wife.

I have not written for a long time, my own girl, as things have been unsettled and I did not want to write and worry you until the atmosphere had cleared a little. I know you would worry but I also hoped you would believe that nothing happens to Daddy "You must believe that, - honor bright."

I hope you received my letter from Singapore and the cables I have sent to you from there and from other places. In case you did not receive my Singapore letter, I will try and recount my activities since leaving Rangoon

in late November, homeward bound to the sweetest, the loveliest, the most adorable and most precious girl in the world for me. The one girl I love, my wife.

I left Rangoon on November 29th, by ship and was due to sail from Singapore on Dec 8th. After getting as far as Penang, it appeared that I would miss connections if I stayed on the ship, so to make certain, I left the ship at Penang and proceeded to Singapore by rail. I arrived in Singapore on Dec 4th or 5th, I forgot which, only to hear the disappointing news that the ship would not sail until around the middle of the month. It had not arrived and never did arrive during my stay in Singapore, as, after the trouble had started, so she ran down south to a safer port. I believe she is now on her way home again but from the other direction and there was no way I could make connections with her.

Well on the morning of Dec 8th the bombs started falling and you can imagine what a surprise it was. I was out at the Seaview Hotel, away from the center of activities but quite close enough to hear all the commotion. Singapore did not suffer much damage in the first raid, which is surprising as there was no alarm sounded until sometime later and they had no chance to put up any opposition. I believe I told you about Elfin joined me that morning, Elfin, that little mischievous unreliable girl. She surely was a comfort though and I knew you had sent her to me. Now she is home again for a short time but I realize she must have been very active for some time even before that morning. Do you remember, dearest, the morning of your first arrival in Singapore, seven sweet years ago, when I pushed all the boats out of the harbor so your ship could come in? Well that's what Elfin was doing except that she was pushing my ship away so it would not arrive. Elfin knew that had the ship been on time, I might have been in a worse position. Tell her I'm going to buy her a new golden dress and golden slippers too, just as soon as I return.

After considering everything, I decided my best move would be to return to Rangoon and eventually to Calcutta. I could not get out of Singapore by any means whatsoever so I returned immediately to Penang by rail thinking to get a ship from there to Rangoon or Colombo. I reached Penang just in time to run into another mess of fun and decided that, after all, Singapore wasn't such a bad spot. The casualties in Penang were quite heavy and I returned the following night to Singapore. Aside from the trip across from Penang to the mainland to catch the train the return to Singapore was uneventful.

We had quite a few more raids in Singapore up to the time I finally got away on Dec 23rd. During this time, I made several attempts to leave, once signing up as a member of the crew of a ship bound for Australia and eventually to San Pedro. I only had an hour to catch the ship which was lying out a mile from shore. I arranged for a launch to meet me and grabbed a taxi back to the hotel. I only had time to cram some clothes in a couple suitcases and left the rest of the stuff at the hotel to be called for by our office. When I arrived at the launch, I found everything OK with about 20 minutes to spare. That is OK except for one little thing -- there was nobody to run the launch. The end of the story is that I sadly watched the ship steam away leaving behind it one of their crew. Next, I was offered passage on a gasoline tanker going to Rangoon. This offer I respectfully declined as, while I did not mind being on a ship which might be hit, I did not like the idea of being thrown into a sea of blazing oil. Finally, as I say, I got away on Dec 23rd having secured a first class deck passage on a ship to Batavia. It took two days to get there, after zig-zagging all over the place and going around in circles. I spent a very pleasant three days at the Hotel des Indes with no air raid alarms although I imagine they are having a few of them there now. Our old mandoer at the hotel was tickled to see me and, as all of them do, his first question was about Njonja. I saw Sandy Maer and Pauline and Bill Ogden and some of the rest of the people you know and all of them asked about Patricia.

On Dec 28th, I managed to secure air passage from Batavia to Rangoon as we left in the morning landed at Palembang. While refueling at the airport and having a fattening up potion, I ran across Mr. McCall. You may remember him at Pendops as the one who was saving silver half dollars. Leaving Palembang we headed for Singapore after about two hours with no incidents to report. Singapore was my only fear as I feared I might get kicked off there if some army men had priority. That would have put me right back where I had started from. I breathed a sigh of relief when we left Singapore and headed for Medan where we arrived about 2 1/2 hours later. We now appeared to be well away from the center of activities and while they refueled the plane, I went into the airport building for another bottle of beer. We had been on the ground about twenty minutes and I was calmly drinking my beer when the report arrived that a number of planes were approaching. It was not known whether they were friendly or enemy planes so everyone rushed to the entrance or outside to watch them come in. I still had a sip of beer left in my glass and as Njonja knows, I hate to leave any beer. I, therefore, was late getting to the entrance and arrived just in time to see six planes nearly overhead. I had only one glimpse of them, and did not see their markings or anything but for some reason or other they did not look good to me. I had only time to take two steps back into the building and throw myself on the floor. Before I reached the floor the remains of the building came down on us and we were buried in about six inches of tiles and plaster. Fortunately the building was of very light construction and there wasn't too much to fall. Immediately the bombs started falling they began machine gunning and again Elfin must have been there as the nearest they came to me was the fellows lying right alongside. You can imagine that I was a sight when I crawled out from under with only a few lumps on the head and some minor scratches. There were said to be 17 planes in all but six was all I saw. I wasn't interested in looking for the rest of them. Unfortunately, our plane was also hit and the last I saw of it when leaving the airport, it was a mass of flames. Everything I had with me (a suitcase and my briefcase) was destroyed, and worst of all, the pictures I was carrying of my Njonja.

It was a warm day and I had left my coat on the plane. Could you, my dearest, send me some more pictures. I still have my ring that Njonja gave to me and the ring that I gave to Njonja. The ring that belongs to Njonja has a couple slight cracks in it but still looks beautiful. I had my hands over my head for protection and something must have hit it. I still have my belt buckle but the marvelous present from my sweetheart is gone, my comb and nail file and pretty tie clasp. Someday, my precious will you replace them. My comb and nail file were in my coat and the tie clasp must have been lost in the shuffle. I searched for it as long as I dared but it could not be found.

Having lost our plane there was nothing to do but wait for another and that one didn't arrive for eight days. I stayed at the manager's house in Medan, about a block from the airport, and borrowed some clothes from him until I could buy more. What I hadn't lost on the plane, I left at Batavia, but when, if ever I will get there again nobody knows. That is the least of our worries.

Eight days is a long time to lay around doing nothing so I went down to the installation one day to check their stocks for them. Most of that day was spent running from the godowns to the air raid shelter and finally I gave it up. Their system of alarm while I was there was not very good. There was no alarm giver for the first raid until some minutes after the bombs had been dropped and once when checking stocks, the planes had been overhead for five minutes before the alarm sounded. They were quite high and I could not hear them from inside the godown. Fortunately they were only taking pictures and dropped no bombs.

About three o'clock in the morning, we took off for Rangoon arriving at two in the afternoon of Jan 5th. Rangoon had had several raids before I arrived, two of them quite serious as far as casualties were concerned. The first thing I did on arrival was to stop into the office and leave my baggage while

I went to find a much needed beer. If I keep this up there is going to be more beer than bombs in this little story. You should have seen my baggage when I arrived. I had three each of shirts, underwear and socks which I bought in Medan as well as a cheap safety razor and toothbrush. All of it was crammed into two small tiny fibre suitcases. The suitcases were the funniest part of the whole performance, You would have gotten a great kick out of them.

I hadn't been in town for over twenty minutes and had just taken my last sip of beer when the alarm sounded. I hadn't paid for the beer yet and you can imagine that I didn't worry much about that but rushed back for the office as soon as I could. They are in a fine new building with the best basement in town and as it was only two blocks away, I took a chance on getting to it rather than some other place less secure especially since there were no planes overhead. You may wonder why I know where to head for but I'm gradually getting smart about those things. My first thought nowadays when I arrive anyplace is to spy out the best and strongest hiding places within a reasonable distance.

I stayed in Rangoon for 17 days and we were continually bothered with air raids, most of them at night. The Strand Hotel had to close up after the first couple of raids as all their servants flew the coop so I stayed at Pollards. You could get a room if you wanted to at the Strand but you had to make your own beds and rustle your own food. The few guests who remained were cooking and serving their own food out in the kitchen when I arrived. Besides, the Strand Hotel wasn't in too healthy a spot these days and Pollard had fixed up a pretty good hide-out at his place.

When I got to Rangoon, I found out I had a job all cut out and it is certainly a fine one. Hong Kong had lost all of their records when the place fell and it's my job to try and piece things together again. It seemed worse than a Humpty-Dumpty problem at first but things are gradually taking shape.

Hired eight clerks at Rangoon and fortunately I have the assistance of Chari who came over from India to help out. He certainly has been a lot of help and is one of the few who have stuck with us. Because of interruptions in work when air raid alarms sounded and because of a general nervousness after each raid, it was decided to move all our records to Calcutta and I managed to obtain boat passage for Chari and two other clerks. A fourth clerk is now on the way by land, a great part of the trip which has to be done on foot.

After seeing that arrangements had been made to get Chari and the others out, I took a train to Lashio (north of Mandalay and the western end of the Burma Road) hoping it would be possible to get a plane from there to Calcutta. It was out of the question flying direct to Calcutta from Rangoon as the planes were all booked for months to come and besides it didn't look too favorable at the time.

Arrived in Lashio which might remind you of a boom town out west and spent 4 days in a shack built of Piano boxes or something waiting to catch a plane out. Went out to the airfield to meet every plane that arrived but each one was fully booked up and they could carry no more passengers. Finally, on the fourth day, a plane came through which had been badly machine gunned by the Japs in ferrying people out of Hong Kong and which they were bringing to India for repairs. They nicknamed it the "flying sieve" which was very appropriate only it had a lot more holes in it than the ordinary sieve. It was certainly "air-conditioned." It was not in the best condition and they did not want to take passengers but I figured if the pilot and crew were willing to take a chance, it was OK with me. Besides, I promised to buy the pilot a bottle of beer when we landed in Calcutta. Well, after a little talking, we took off and arrived safely about five hours later. Incidentally, I bought the pilot two bottles of beer.

Things are much quieter in Calcutta and we are able to get much more work done here than in Rangoon. As most of our information comes from China and

as we can get air mail from there in one day the communications system is also much better to Calcutta than it was in Rangoon. I expect, in a few weeks, if things look promising, to take a trip up to Chungking in China and see what I can find out from there. Expect to be away for two or three weeks and then return to India.

Please, my precious wife, do not worry too much about your daddy who loves you so much. Daddy will take every precaution to travel safely so that one day, I hope soon, we can be home together, to always be together, me and the "best gal in the world."

My passport has expired and I will have to get a new one soon. I will send you one of my passport photos when I have some taken.

Daddy is perfectly well, not a single solitary injury, no nervousness, no shell blast, no nothing except the mostest love for his pretty girl.

I love you my darling - Elbert

PS: Tell mother I will write to her in a day or so. I do not have her address, as my address book is no more, so I have to have you send the letter on to her. My best love to your mother. Tell her I rely upon her to take good care of my most precious wife.

Love - Elbert

Back issues of Taylorology are available on the Web at any of the following:

<http://www.angelfire.com/az/Taylorology/>

<http://www.etext.org/Zines/ASCII/Taylorology/>

<http://www.silent-movies.com/Taylorology/>

Full text searches of back issues can be done at <http://www.etext.org/Zines/>
or at <http://www.silent-movies.com/search.html>. For more information about
Taylor, see

WILLIAM DESMOND TAYLOR: A DOSSIER (Scarecrow Press, 1991)

* T A Y L O R O L O G Y *
* A Continuing Exploration of the Life and Death of William Desmond Taylor *
* *
* Issue 86 -- February 2000 Editor: Bruce Long *
* TAYLOROLOGY may be freely distributed *

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Reporting the Taylor Murder: Days 11 and 12
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What is TAYLOROLOGY?

TAYLOROLOGY is a newsletter focusing on the life and death of William Desmond Taylor, a top Paramount film director in early Hollywood who was shot to death on February 1, 1922. His unsolved murder was one of Hollywood's major scandals. This newsletter will deal with: (a) The facts of Taylor's life; (b) The facts and rumors of Taylor's murder; (c) The impact of the Taylor murder on Hollywood and the nation; (d) Taylor's associates and the Hollywood silent film industry in which Taylor worked. Primary emphasis will be given toward reprinting, referencing and analyzing source material, and sifting it for accuracy.

Grapevine Video has recently released "The Biograph Series: Mack Sennett Director, Vol. 1 and 2". Each of the two tapes contains short Biograph films directed by Mack Sennett between 1911-1912 (before he founded Keystone), and many of the shorts feature Mabel Normand. See <http://www.grapevinevideo.com>

The class at Georgia Tech on multimedia "Advanced Design and Production," with the Fall 1999 semester class project on the Taylor case, has moved their web site on the project to <http://wdt.lcc.gatech.edu>

The CD-ROM project, titled "Silent Screen: The Mysterious Death of William Desmond Taylor" has been completed. A copy can be obtained free with a small

donation to cover production and mailing cost; contact information is at <http://wdt.lcc.gatech.edu> (but the CD-ROM is initially only available in Macintosh format). There are also a few T-shirts on the project available. This was an educational project and therefore does not have the production values of expensive commercial CD-ROMs. Although drawing heavily on material found in TAYLOROLOGY, "Silent Screen" also includes some dramatized and fictionalized elements, and the Taylor material has a few errors. But overall the CD-ROM is a very nice project, and Taylor case fans will enjoy hearing the "voices" of the participants in the case and "seeing" some of the events transpire on their computers. And those who disagree with the editorial conclusions reached by Bruce Long in past issues of TAYLOROLOGY, may relish seeing him meet his appropriate fate. (Mother of Mercy, is this the end of...??)

Reporting the Taylor Murder: Days 11 and 12

Below are some highlights of the press reports published in the eleventh and twelfth days after Taylor's body was discovered.

* * * * *

February 13, 1922

LOS ANGELES EXAMINER

Coming fast on the latest new and important developments in the William Desmond Taylor murder mystery during the day, District Attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine late last night hurriedly left his office in his motor car and in company with former Chief of Police Charles A. Jones and Ben Smith, court reporter, started on a quest shrouded in mystery, which is regarded as likely to have a vital bearing on the case.

The District Attorney's hurried trip apparently resulted from a

conference at his home in which a woman and two men figured.

A woman was seen to leave Woolwine's house after an extended visit while the district attorney and Jones were there. She drove away alone but was observed a short time later in her car with a male companion. They drove by Woolwine's house and then disappeared.

But whatever transpired during the conference electrified the prosecutor and his aides into instant action.

Woolwine and Jones hurried to the Hall of Records in a taxicab where they picked up Smith, the court reporter.

Mabel Normand, noted film actress and close friend of the slain director, was reported last night to be dangerously ill, even in more serious condition than on Saturday night, as exclusively told in yesterday's Examiner.

It was learned that she is being attended by a trained nurse and is being watched over carefully by her physician.

Her condition was said to be so serious that all visitors would be denied entrance to her home for at least ten days.

She suffered a severe nervous relapse some days ago. But yesterday it was said that her illness had reached a serious stage as to be regarded as dangerous.

One of the most startling bits of information turned over to the investigators was the reported statement of Henry Peavey, Taylor's colored servant, that he expected to see his employer killed. This statement was made, it is said, the day following the robbery of Taylor's home by Sands.

Shortly after the last robbery of the slain director's home Peavey is said to have told Harold Freeman, a milkman who delivered milk to the Taylor home, that he expected to find Taylor dead on the morning after the robbery was committed and would not be surprised if he himself were not later killed.

Of strange import was Peavey's description, according to Freeman, of how he expected to find Taylor's dead body.

The description was said to correspond with the position in which Taylor was found on the morning of February 1 [sic].

Whether this description was merely a strange mixture of superstition and clairvoyance or the result of some information upon which the belief was based is a matter upon which Peavey will be quizzed, according to the officers.

Another development of importance concerned information about a woman whom Edward F. Sands, former valet-secretary to Taylor, is alleged to have visited frequently. This information was turned over to the authorities by Freeman.

According to Freeman, Sands was in the habit of driving Taylor's car to this woman's house at least once a day during the director's absence in Europe. This address is in the hands of The Examiner but is being withheld at the request of officers who are investigating the clue.

Freeman, who says he met Sands every morning for several months, also declared that he saw the fugitive ex-servant shortly after Christmas in front of a downtown theater. Freeman states that he and his wife were standing in front of the showhouse early in the evening when Sands passed.

Freeman further declared, it is said, that Sands asserted that he had "something on Taylor." On several occasions when Freeman remarked how well Taylor treated his employee, Sands is said to have replied:

"Well, he has to treat me right, for I certainly have the goods on him."

Captain of Detectives David L. Adams, who has heretofore held that the arrest of Sands was the one immediately vital objective toward which the police should bend their efforts, yesterday admitted that officers were now searching for a man whose name has not been mentioned in the case.

"I cannot make public what clues the detectives are following," said the captain, "but I will say that if there is an arrest in the very near future it will likely be of a person not previously mentioned in the baffling mystery and who has not been questioned.

"If my men bring in some person who has been a total stranger to the investigation I shall not be surprised. Although I do not look for an arrest today, this is a case in which the unexpected may happen."

The importance the captain attaches to this latest clue may be judged

from the fact that he has assigned four of his ablest officers to find and question the man referred to. Detective Sergeant Murphy and another investigator were on an especially important angle, it was said...

Captain of Detectives David L. Adams yesterday scouted the theory that the cap found Friday in the room of Walter Thiele, held on a charge of suspicion of burglar, bore out any indication that it, in any way, figured in the Taylor murder case.

This cap, brought to the district attorney's office shortly before midnight Friday and shown in the presence of Mabel Normand, the film star, was described by investigating authorities as bearing blood stains. These, if present, are thought to be of minor significance and such as might come from a cut finger and imprinted upon the visor.

"I have not seen the cap, but to the best of my knowledge it has no blood stains whatever, Captain Adams said. "I have never intimated to anyone that Thiele, in whose rooms it was found, had anything to do with the murder. In fact, I have eliminated both him and his companion, John Dailey, from the slightest suspicion."

Captain Adams did say, however, that a search has been instituted for Dailey, but only for the purpose of charging him jointly with suspicion of burglary in connection with the looting of an apartment house on West Fourth Street at which Dailey had been employed up to February 9 as janitor...

A stirring defense was offered for Hollywood and all attackers of the morals, habits or actions of the motion picture profession as a profession were hotly scored last night at a meeting of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America, an organization of well known writers for the films.

The meeting was held at the club house, 6716 Sunset Boulevard, and was attended by about 150 persons.

Frank E. Woods, president of the organization, suggested a resolution offering \$1000 for the capture of the slayer of William Desmond Taylor and made the first contribution of \$100. The requested sum was quickly pledged and the motion passed. Those who subscribed \$100 apiece besides Woods were:

Thompson Buchanan, Albert Shelby Le Vino, J. E. Nash, Frank Condon, Perley Poore Sheehan, Walldemann Young, Wallace Clifton, Miss June Mathis and Walter Woods.

* * * * *

February 13, 1922
LOS ANGELES TIMES

..."This is one of the quietest days since the murder," said Capt. of Detectives Adams. "It is still my opinion that Edward F. Sands is the man we want and I would give anything to get my hands on him. So far as I know only one of the detectives assigned to the case is working today and he is on a line of investigation from which I expect no immediate results."...

* * * * *

February 13, 1922
LOS ANGELES EXAMINER
NEW YORK AMERICAN

Neva Gerber, film actress, probably will be the next witness to face District Attorney Thomas Lee Woolwine and be quizzed regarding her knowledge of William Desmond Taylor, murdered film director.

Many questions will be asked her, as she sits before the men who are delving into every possible angle of the dead man's life, in an effort to bring his assassin to justice.

Miss Gerber's was the name written by Taylor on a check for \$500, and also written by her on the reverse side of the chick when it was cashed. That was only three weeks before Taylor was killed.

Yesterday Miss Gerber spoke calmly of her relations with Taylor--of their long friendship and engagement to marry, and of the breaking of the engagement.

"Although our engagement was ended about two years ago," Miss Gerber

said, "Mr. Taylor and I remained the best of friends, and frequently saw each other.

"His increasing moodiness and my mother's unwillingness that I should marry a man so much older than I were contributing causes to the broken betrothal, but I feel sure that he did really love me, and I was very fond of him.

"The checks which Mr. Taylor gave me from time to time, can all be easily explained. During our engagement Mr. Taylor gave me an automobile as a Christmas present; that is, it was understood between Mr. Taylor and myself as a holiday present. The machine was not all paid for at one time, and in order to prevent gossips from misconstruing the spirit in which the gift was made, Mr. Taylor simply made out checks to me so I could pay for the car in my own name.

"Numerous other checks were for distributing charity to the poor. Many a time Mr. Taylor would say:

"'Neva, I know a poor family in desperate need. There are hungry children crying for bread and it makes me unhappy to think about them. You go to see them and buy them what they need.'

"Always, of course, he would give me a check to cover the amount I had expended in relieving the case. It was the bigness of his heart that made him feel this way and those who knew him think nothing of his giving me money like that.

"As to the last check, given me a short time before his death, that can be accounted for very simply. Mr. Taylor was always looking after my career and doing all he could to help me progress in the film world. He knew I was in temporary financial straits at that time and voluntarily sent me the \$500."

Miss Gerber stated that Mr. Taylor had frequently mentioned his mother, daughter and sister to her, but that she was under the impression that the daughter was in London with his mother. She said:

"When Mr. Taylor returned from overseas, he was gloomier and more despondent than ever. He told me that his sister's husband had been killed

in battle and that during a midnight attack on London by German airships dropping deadly bombs, his mother and his little daughter had been killed. Of course I thought this was enough to account for his sadness, but besides his depression he also grew irritable, and it was the irritability that made me feel it would be a mistake for us to be married."

"Isn't it a rather unconventional and unusual thing for a man to give checks to a woman, even when they are engaged?" Miss Gerber was asked.

"Oh, no," she replied. "Not when he intended to marry me, as he did, and felt like he wanted to be doing something for me all the time."

"But afterwards, when the engagement was ended, was it not extraordinary that he should continue to shower such generous monetary gifts upon you?" the question was presented.

"Not at all," Miss Gerber asserted with assurance. "He seemed to think that it was up to him to look after my welfare and I think he would have continued his generosity to me even if he had lived to a very old age."

Just what was the reason for the whimsical and unequal gifts showered by William D. Taylor on various people, remains yet to be seen. To his invalid sister-in-law, with two needy, helpless children in Monrovia; he sent the comparatively small sum of fifty dollars a month.

A stiff formal little note accompanied each of these donations and at Christmas time he sent an extra twenty-five dollars, which he said was to get something for the little girls.

But to the pretty moving picture actress, during a period of several years, there was scarcely a singly check for less than one hundred dollars and sometimes there were several of these in the same month.

* * * * *

February 13, 1922

SANTA ANA REGISTER

...Public officials in Los Angeles are hinting that powerful interests in the movie world have ordered that mouths be closed lest the disclosures in

the investigation into the murder of William Desmond Taylor bring additional discredit upon the movie industry. The order should be for a complete clean-up, and until the heads of the industry set adrift all moral derelicts who may be connected with the industry, the movie colonies can expect to be looked upon with suspicion and without sympathy.

* * * * *

February 13, 1922

Edward Doherty

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

Los Angeles--...The police were given an astounding new theory as to the murder today, a story of revenge that smoldered for fourteen years to burst out in a sudden deadly blaze of hate--a tip that is hard to verify.

It goes back to the days when Taylor was William Cunningham Deane-Tanner of New York, manager of an art story, a husband and a father, the reputed scion of a historic English-Irish family.

This new theory comes from an anonymous source, but because it is plausible, the police are making such investigation of it as they can.

Taylor met a beautiful young girl in New York some fifteen years ago, according to this story, and fell in love with her. He followed her wherever she went. He called her on the phone and spent hours talking to her. He took her to luncheon and to dinner.

The girl was in love with him, too; wanted to become his wife. Taylor never had revealed the fact that he already was married; that he had a daughter.

She was the sort of girl Taylor knew who would not allow him to get a divorce. She was clean and pure. No scandal must touch her. Taylor could not live without her and he could not marry her.

He disappeared without a word to anyone. It was to him the easiest way for the girl, the hardest for himself. He gave up all he had that he might not harm the woman he loved. He was afraid of himself.

The girl wondered and waited and mourned. She did not know what had happened.

One night she had been in his arms and they had been talking about their future, the home they were to occupy, the joy that was to walk with them through life, the wonder of their love.

And the next night silence, no answer to frantic telephone calls, no messages, no clues. It was as if she had but dreamed a lover and woke to garish reality.

Suddenly the girl got up and started to run away. Her mother hastily threw the book to the bench and ran after her daughter. Out of the book slipped a picture.

The girl of the story picked up the photograph and looked at it. It was the picture of Tanner.

She learned in a little while all there was to know about Tanner. This was his wife. This was his daughter. He had deserted them a year ago-- simply dropped out of sight. Not a word had been heard from him.

The girl went home stunned, mortally wounded. She told the story to her brother and then went out to Coney Island. And when the bright morning came men searching the beach came across her body, floating on the waves.

The dead girl's brother confided to his friend, a man who had loved her as much as Tanner had. He had been Tanner's rival. He had tried desperately to win her, after Tanner had taken himself away. He had even tried to find Tanner for her, when she convinced him that life without the man was a mockery.

This man, the theory has it, is the man who on the night of Wednesday, February 1, shot Taylor, who was Tanner, and stretched him dead on the floor.

This man, according to the story, had tried for fourteen years to find the man who had broken the heart of the girl and killed her.

He devoted his life to the pursuit. He came on old tracks in Colorado, in Alaska, in Flanders, in France, and finally he picked up the trail.

There were no names mentioned in this story, but the man who gave it to the police says he is the brother of the girl who died for love of Tanner,

and the police remember that Taylor once said: "I was in love once, but the woman died."

Perhaps the story is true, they say. Perhaps the New York police can help...

* * * * *

February 13, 1922

LOS ANGELES RECORD

...Woolwine spent the night with Charles Jones, former police chief, running down leads that cropped up in the investigation. When the district attorney arrived at his office at noon, he gave out a statement to the effect that the quest in the night had proved fruitless.

Jones, he said, was in the case to help him on certain angles of the investigation.

A rigid investigation of Taylor's loans was urged Monday upon local authorities by legal representatives of persons prominently identified with the film colony.

According to Public Administrator Frank Bryson, stubs of Taylor's check books show many loans. Some of these were said to be large and others small.

"Find out to whom these loans were made," an attorney said, "and the probability is light will be thrown on the murder."

The theory of Taylor's friends is that the loans were made simply out of his generosity but others believe he was being persistently mulcted by blackmailers.

"It is known," said one of the men urging the loan investigation, "that Taylor's bank account was not large, this in spite of the fact that his salary was in excess of \$50,000 a year.

"Suppose Taylor got tired of scattering his earnings among these bloodsuckers and refused to 'come through'--wouldn't that be a good background for a murder?"

A clue, described as one of the most promising yet uncovered in the

Taylor murder, today was expected to lead to an arrest soon.

The new clue is connected with the past life of Taylor, who was known in New York as William Dean Tanner, and the man sought for arrest has not previously been mentioned in the case, according to Detective Captain Adams.

The new tip was given by a woman whose name is being withheld...

Police were given a mysterious tip that about the time Taylor was murdered on the night of February 1, Sands visited a sweetheart in Los Angeles. A close watch on the residence of the girl was established immediately and all her movements were traced.

It was reported she was about to leave the city...

* * * * *

February 13, 1922

William M. Creakbaum

LOS ANGELES RECORD

Meet Henry Peavey

"I refuse to talk. If you all wants to talk to me, call the wagon!"

Such was the opening statement of Henry Peavey, negro valet of William D. Taylor, slain film director, when pressed for a direct interview Monday.

Peavey, who has suddenly become the neighborhood hero on East Third Street since the murder of his master, has persistently refused to talk to newspapermen.

Today a reporter, armed with an impressive press badge, sought the elusive Henry in his own haunts. Peavey maintains headquarters in a Jap [sic] rooming house, referred to in that part of the city as a hotel.

He also frequents a poolroom a few doors east.

Today he was to be found a neither place. The newspaperman, sauntering down the street, sighted Henry perched on a neighboring window ledge surrounded by a group of interested East Third-Streeters.

Clad in a greenish brown suit with a pinch-back coat from under which

gleamed a spotless white V-necked sweater, Henry basked in the sun and in the consciousness that he was the best-dressed negro in that part of the city.

The reporter approached him.

"Henry, I'd like to talk to you," he said.

"Ah ain't talkin' to no one," Henry announced. "If you all wants to talk to me--"

The newspaperman drew back his coat until a press badge was visible. Mr. Peavey's eyes widened.

"If you all's from headquatahs, jes call the wagon. Mr. Woolwine, he told me not to talk to nobody."

"I'm not going to call the wagon. It would create a scene here on the street."

"Ah don't care," insisted Peavey. "They's been too much in the papers."

"What have they been saying now?" asked the newspaperman, innocently.

"Ah don't know," Henry said. "I ain't had the papers read to me this morning. You see, I cain't read or write."

The reporter drew a back of cigarettes and offered one to the negro. He smiled and shook his head. His big brown eyes gleamed from under the visor of his tweed cap.

"Ah never smokes," he said, "an' Ah never drinks. That's why Mr. Taylor and me got along so fine together. He never drank very much. He had a bottle of champagne on ice at New Years, an' he says to me, he says, 'Henry, open that bottle, an' we'll split it between us.'

"An' Ah did, an' that was my first drink in two years."

Henry was talking loquaciously now.

"Mr. Taylor never drank 'less it was for sociability," he explained. "They say that he an' Miss Normand was drinkin' gin and orange juice the night he was shot. Ah don't know, cause Ah left befo' she did. Anyhow, I nevah knowed much about his private affairs, cause Ah didn't live there. Ah spose if Ah'd slept there, Ah'd known mo' 'em."

"Have you found a new job yet, Henry?"

"Yassah!" with a pleased smile. "Say Ah has! Ah'm going to work for

Mrs. Christy Cabanne next week, or jes soon as these police and paper men get done axing me questions.

"You see, Ah used to work for her befo' Ah went to work for Mr. Taylor, jes six months ago. Mrs. Cabanne's mother, she made the fust pair pants this chile ever wore."

His big smile beamed again as he recalled the days under his former mistress--the wife of a motion picture producer--and thought of the days to come.

"Ah'll be glad when Ah cooks mah own meals again. Ah eats in these heah restaurants, then Ah goes down the street spittin' to get the bad taste out of mah mouth the whole day long.

"They's nothin' like yo' own cooking."

At the mention of eating, Henry abruptly terminated the interview. He waved an easy goodbye to the reporter, and sauntered down the street, to disappear in the restaurant which he had just branded as the horror of his epicurean existence.

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February 14, 1922

Edward Doherty

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Los Angeles--Four "mystery" witnesses, two women and two men, were led to the district attorney's office today, and the foul pot of scandal that began to boil with the murder of William Desmond Taylor, film director, started to bubble up and spill over.

These four people, it is said, told District Attorney Woolwine a story that involves a man high in Hollywood and a woman--one of the women whose names have been most prominently mentioned in the case. The motive, it is declared, was jealousy.

It was learned late tonight that one of the women is "Lady Jane" Lewis, modiste to the beauties of pagan Hollywood. The other is said to be Miss S.

O. Lewis. The men were Detectives Aldworth and Harry Kearin of the Hollywood police station.

Reputations that have been built up over a stretch of years and by the expenditure of much money will wither in a night when the story grows public, say those who know.

The man in the case has not been linked with the murder until this afternoon.

Woolwine would not discuss what they had to say. Most of the afternoon was taken up with them...

Before the witness came to his office, Woolwine had been going over the letters written to Taylor by Mabel Normand and others, letters that seemed to show a connection between the dead man and the rings of bootleggers and narcotic smugglers, letters that seemed to indicate Taylor had supplied whisky and drugs for several frail white lilies of the screen...

"What they should do," an attorney said, "is to clean house. When a barrel of fruit contains rottenness you don't correct by propaganda. Throw out the rotten fruit. Let Hollywood get rid of its degenerates, its drug addicts, its moral lepers, and then let the screen writers write."

Miss Minter gave out a statement today attacking those who would besmirch the memory of her best friend, the man accused of deserting at least one wife and one child, of falsifying his army record, of being a member of a bestial cult, of supplying booze and cocaine to those who would purchase them...

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February 14, 1922
LOS ANGELES TIMES

...While Mr. Woolwine was talking to the visitors to his office, Detectives Cato and Cahill were following up clues uncovered several days ago and leading to the theory that a well-known drug peddler may have been the slayer of the noted film director...

Several different theories of the crime were developed during the day, many supposed clues were run down, and many "tips" were received. But as for actual progress in the baffling case, no official connected with the inquiry admitted making any.

Mary Miles Minter, youthful actress who has been questioned as part of the investigation, issued the following statement, authorized by her attorneys:

"There is no person or financial sacrifice that I would not gladly make to bring the slayer of William Desmond Taylor to justice.

"Mr. Taylor was one of my best friends. His death was a great shock to me. I met Mr. Taylor first in 1919, when he became my director. I was then 17 years of age, and his inspiration, his unfailing courtesy and consideration not only to me but to all with whom he came in contact immediately won my highest admiration.

"From 1919 until the day of his death Mr. Taylor was to me the symbol of honor and manliness, an inspiration, friend, guide and counselor--the symbol of all a girl admires in a man.

"His friendship was uplifting and his advice and aid were invaluable.

"It would be nothing less than veritable ingratitude if I did not, now that he is dead, raise my voice to proclaim what he was and to repudiate those who would besmirch his character.

"I have told the authorities all that I know of both his life here and in the East. That, I fear, has been of little aid to them.

"I cannot conceive the character of a person who would voluntarily wrong Mr. Taylor or cause his death."...

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February 14, 1922

Florence Lawrence

LOS ANGELES EXAMINER

Mabel Normand says she has the much discussed letters written by her to

the late William D. Taylor. They were returned to her yesterday by the District Attorney's office and are, as she says, of such childish, innocent tone that any value they might have either as a sensational feature in the development of this case or as indications of any high emotional nature is absolutely nil.

Miss Normand talked at length last night when she heard that a rumor was afloat to the effect that these letters were to be released for publication.

"For myself," and the star spoke dramatically, "I had no one who could possibly have been interested enough in me to do such a thing. I had no jealous lovers. My acquaintance among the men and women of Los Angeles was large, but I had never encouraged any one to believe that he was first in my heart and I had only good friends, but no one who could possibly construe my great and beautiful friendship for Mr. Taylor as anything but a most beneficial interest in my life."

"I have all the letters in my possession," she said, "and I am sure that they have not been copied or tampered with. They are all of such a nonsensical nature that they have absolutely no value except as they exhibit and indicate the good fellowship which existed between Mr. Taylor and myself.

"Why, I wouldn't have dreamed of writing anything to him except of a light-hearted nature. Our whole friendship was founded on that line. He was a wonderful man, and a generous man, and many of my notes to him were requests for small contributions for my pet charities. I always gave small checks to the Little Sisters of the Poor, and I frequently asked him to make similar donations.

"He used to urge me to be less extravagant and I wanted to jolly him about his wisdom and at the same time make my own purpose clear to him. I could never refuse any one in distress. I loved to help those about me who were in hard luck, and one of the greatest pleasures that my success in pictures has brought me was that it enabled me to give freely to those who needed money. The only value I could see in a large salary was to be able to help those less fortunate than I.

"My letters were all so childish and so simple that they could have

meant nothing but perhaps a moment's cheer to so wonderful a man as was Mr. Taylor. He was a fine, clean, wholesome man, and he spurred my ambition and made me study. He wasn't like younger men who always wanted me to put on evening clothes and go out somewhere to dance and dine. He liked to sit at home and talk about books. He helped me so much with my reading and study and encouraged me to think that some time I might accomplish something along that line."

Miss Normand recited from memory several of her letters to Mr. Taylor, which all bore out her statements in regard to the merry exchange of badinage between them.

One letter referred to a little lark in which they had indulged one evening when they went to see a motion picture. She had dismissed her chauffeur and decided to go to another theater where a star whom she admired, Richard Barthelmess, was to be seen.

"I thought it would be fun to ride in a Ford," said the beautiful young actress, "so I asked a car passing if they would drive us to the next theater and Mr. Taylor and I rode and paid fifty cents for the trip. We thought it a lot of fun.

"Later we walked back to the first theater to see the beginning of the film, and on the way down the street talked about the art of the cinema, and the play itself.

"The next day I had a long letter of advice from Mr. Taylor, which was really a burlesque. He chided me for the reckless expenditure of the fifty cents, joking of course, and laughed at my enjoyment of this harmless little escapade. All our letters were exchanged in just that tone.

"You know," added Miss Normand, "film people work hard. They have to work at night and sometimes for days at a time have little leisure away from the set. Such frivolous notes as those Mr. Taylor and I exchanged were merely a brief recreation for both of us. They never had serious portent, and were always as light-hearted and merry as we could make them. Many of our hours were passed in the most serious kind of labor."

Miss Normand is visibly unnerved by the long strain of questioning to

which she has been subjected. She feels more than anything else, however, a fierce sense of injustice to the dead.

"How can people say such terrible things about him?" she asked. "How can those very folk with whom he was associated, the men and women he helped either with movies or friendliness think for a moment that any of those unkind things be true? It is impossible for me to consider it and I think instead of passing resolutions his friends, every one of them, should form a huge fund and offer a tremendous reward for the capture of the man who killed him.

"Every one who could should contribute even if it is only five dollars or one dollar, and many of his associates should easily give a thousand dollars and would, I believe, be glad to do so to have this terrible mystery explained. I am sure Mr. Taylor had no enemies of whom he was aware. He was a man of such open habits, such a sincere and honest man, that he could never have wrought an injustice that could animate such a terrible, vindictive act.

"The murderer must be found and punished, and I should be very glad to head a list of subscribers to such a fund if others in the industry believe that it is the right thing to do.

"It's easy enough to say, 'Oh, what a fine man he was--such a loss to the profession,' but that doesn't count in the punishment of the man who did this terrible deed. I believe that his associates will be ready in a moment to start such a fund and to make the solution of this crime a quick and sure matter.

"I have been put to terrific agony by this whole terrible event, but I make nothing of my own suffering as compared with the unclean things which have been said about the motion picture industry. The shock to me when I learned of the death of my good friend was almost unendurable, but before I could rally from that I was questioned and almost stunned by the knowledge of the horrible suspicions which this crime has wakened about the entire colony of picture folk.

"Such allegations are absolutely unfair. It is, of course, the fault of circumstances that I was the last person known to have seen Mr. Taylor, and I

give thanks every day that on that particular evening I had driven to his house in my big car with my chauffeur in attendance. Sometimes I did get into my little Stutz and we went to drive together, and it is the greatest comfort to me how in this hour of distress that I had gone with attendants on that night."

Here Miss Normand broke down completely and her slight frame, emaciated and worn from the stress of the past two weeks, shook with an attack of terrific coughing.

"Oh, they are talking about sending me away for the winter," she moaned. "This cough is so threatening, and the doctors are afraid my lungs may suffer unless I get to a drier climate."

Miss Normand was asked concerning the wife and daughter of Mr. Taylor.

"Why, what reason do they give for not coming out here at such a time?" she exclaimed. "If I had been that daughter with such a wonderful father nothing could have prevented my coming here at once. A father like that should make any girl proud and eager to do all in her power to solve this terrible mystery. I can't understand how she could have been indifferent to such a man."

Miss Normand did not know that Mr. Taylor had a daughter until the developments following his death, but said that long ago she had heard it mentioned that he had once been married.

The star's rooms are filled with flowers and notes and telegrams of love and affection are constantly reaching her from all parts of the world. The strange fate which included her so closely in the final movements of Mr. Taylor's life has necessarily brought upon her a double burden. She is almost prostrated with grief, and has also the necessity of trying in every way she can to throw some light upon the animating cause which could have brought about so frightful a crime. She has strained every nerve in her endeavor to assist the progress of justice, and the result is almost more than her fragile physique can withstand. But her loyalty to her friend is leading her to put forth every effort, and in her desire to help unveil the identity of the mysterious slayer she is now almost at the point of total

collapse.

She was feeling much stronger last night, however, and with another day of rest her physicians believe she will be on the high road to the recovery of that buoyant health and spirit which is so notable a quality both in her social and professional life.

* * * * *

February 14, 1922

LOS ANGELES EXAMINER

A powerful ring of narcotic peddlers alleged to have been operating in Los Angeles and Hollywood and directed and led by a beautiful woman was the center of investigation last night by officers conducting search for the slayer of William Desmond Taylor, film director.

The nefarious activities of the members of this band who have drawn the suspicions of the investigators were uncovered yesterday by Undersheriff Eugene Biscailuz and Deputy Sheriff Frank Dewar, working under the direction of Sheriff William I. Traeger.

After carrying out a thorough search for the members of the ring the officers announced that they had suddenly and mysteriously disappeared from their usual haunts about the city.

Police have traced the movements of this beautiful woman for the past few months and have found, they say, that although she moved frequently, her home was never located far from the house occupied by Taylor.

The fact that none of the peddlers could be found yesterday is looked upon by the officers as a strong link in the chain which they are trying to forge about the band.

Another important development yesterday was the added declaration of George F. Arto, a machinist, living on Bixel Street, that he saw a third man in front of the court, on Alvarado Street, where Taylor lived, on the night of the murder--a man other than Henry Peavey, the film director's valet, and William Davis, Mabel Normand's chauffeur.

This third man, he asserts, was talking with Peavey. Davis was sitting in the car at the time. Arto, called to the District Attorney's office last Friday, related the alleged occurrence, but was not certain that he made this observation on the night of the murder.

Yesterday, by exchanging notes with the friend and others, he established the fact that his visit was made on the night of February 1.

Davis, upon being shown Arto's statement, reiterated that with the exception of Peavey there was no one present the night of February 1 while he waited for Miss Normand to come from the director's house. Peavey made the same statement.

Following an hour's investigation yesterday afternoon between Charles A. Jones, a special investigator of the case, and other officials eight persons were taken to the District Attorney's office. Five of them were witnesses.

Although the subject of the conference was not divulged it helped clear away many baseless rumors which have hindered progress.

It is expected that today Detective Sergeant J. E. Winn will be assigned to the personal staff of the District Attorney to handle the murder case in the place of Detective Sergeant Eddie King, who is ill.

Rumors that two new women witnesses were called to the District Attorney's office yesterday were denied by detectives.

Dr. Dudley Fulton, Miss Mabel Normand's physician, yesterday issued orders that no one, not even her most intimate friends, should see the film star...

Announcement by the district attorney's office that a number of letters had been found in the dead man's effects from women who had not been mentioned in the case caused something of a stir until an examination showed that they threw no light on the mystery.

The identity of the mystery witness examined late Sunday night by the district attorney and Special Investigator Charles A. Jones was not revealed yesterday. It was announced, however, that no material fact had been adduced in the lengthy statement, which was taken down in shorthand by court Reporter Ben Smith...

That a rigid investigation of all business papers found in Taylor's effects will be made at once was the statement from the District Attorney's office and public administrator's office yesterday.

Frank Bryson, the administrator, wants to secure the last possible detail on the slain man's affairs so that the daughter and whoever, if anyone, else enters into the estate shall have a full accounting.

Already there have been discovered many check stubs showing that Taylor paid out, in the aggregate, a large sum of money which, so far as may be judged, is due the estate. While it does not appear to be legally collectible, neither notes nor other security having been given, the presumption is that many of the checks to various individuals stood for money loaned.

Thus far there has not been found a single entry in the unfortunate man's check stubs or elsewhere which points the way to the perpetrator of the crime.

It is believed by some of the authorities that, to learn the names of all the borrowers of the director's generously disbursed funds might bring a solution to the mystery. This is on the theory that he may have loaned a large amount to some person who preferred to wipe out the debt in blood rather than money.

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February 14, 1922
LOS ANGELES EXAMINER

Declaring that the widely exploited scandals charged to the motion picture industry in Los Angeles are brought about by a few, and not the majority, as a result of which Hollywood has been reflected all over the country as a den of iniquity, a sink of vice, and pest hole of drug addicts and various other euphonious and striking titles, editors of local newspapers, leaders in the motion picture industry and members of the Screen Writers Guild met yesterday at the Chamber of Commerce to discuss plans to

fight such publicity in every way possible...

During the conference a frank and full discussion of the press in its relation to the motion picture industry was participated in by Joseph W. Schenck, Jesse L. Lasky, Frank Woods and others representing the Producers and Screen Writers' Guild, as well as G. G. young of The Examiner, Harry Chandler, president and general manager of a morning paper [The Times]; Edward A. Dickson, editor of The Express; Edwin R. Collins, managing editor of The Herald, and Burton Kulsley, editor of the Record...

Fan Magazines React to the Taylor Case

* * * * *

May 1922

Harry Carr

MOTION PICTURE CLASSIC

In the wake of every disaster come the jackals and hyenas, sniffing at the corpse. The mystery of the murder of William Desmond Taylor, the director, is no exception.

As is always the case in every big news sensation, irresponsible news writers, for their own profit, have flown to the wires and flooded them with wild yarns about Hollywood that were libelous, cruel, malicious, ignorant and yellow to the point of putridity.

A great deal of the rotten junk sent to the newspapers about the Hollywood film colony must be laid for fortuitous circumstance. It so happened that Los Angeles was flooded with newspaper writers sent from Chicago and other Eastern cities to report the Obenchain murder trial. The case had been postponed and the writers were hanging around Los Angeles waiting for entertainment. Having no knowledge of the film colony or of

motion picture people, but with an avid thirst for a good story, they kept the wires hot with strange, wild and fantastic dreams about nude swimming parties, etc. The famous El Paso faker who used to fill the newspapers with pipe dreams must be hanging his head in shame; he is in the piker class. Los Angeles newspapers, as well as the Chamber of Commerce and city council and other commercial organizations, have hotly defended the movie colony. At the same time, a great deal of harm has been done.

Two girls especially have suffered bitterly--Mabel Normand and Mary Miles Minter. By the strange police doctrine that every letter found in the house of a murdered man belongs to the public to be pawed over, both these girls have been subjected to mortification and shame which will probably have a lasting effect.

Mary Miles Minter got a particularly tough deal. At an age when most girls are thinking of nothing but ice cream sodas and have no responsibilities except to keep their noses powdered, Mary has to walk in a pitiless scrutiny that is the lot of heroes and kings. Like many another young girl, she wrote breathlessly indiscreet letters to a man old enough to be her father. There seems to be nothing particularly sinful in her writing, "I love you; I love you: I love you," to Taylor. Yet these letters have been printed with a vileness of insinuation and innuendo that must have been a heart-breaking experience for a young girl--or an old girl either. The entire motion picture industry has without doubt suffered severely, though unjustly, by reason of the Taylor case.

* * * * *

April 1922
James Quirk
PHOTOPLAY

What's It All About?

The governor of a great state is sued for seduction by his stenographer

--a leading banker is accused by his wife of illicit love affairs--a well-known minister with a family is arrested for white slavery--an eminent lawyer is mutilated by a husband for home-breaking.

But does the world conclude that governors, or bankers, or ministers, or lawyers--as a class--are therefore rotten, that the whole profession is given to those practices of which one of its members has been accused or found guilty?

No! The thinking world is too just--too sane.

And yet, because two prominent figures in motion pictures have recently been the center of scandal, the entire profession has been put under a cloud.

The reason for this inquiry is manifold:

To begin with, Hollywood is the most talked-of city in America; it is a small community populated by famous people who exist in the white glare of a merciless spotlight. They have as much privacy in their work or lives as a Broadway traffic policeman.

Moreover, the men and women who work in pictures are the most popular and intimately familiar figures in the nation's life.

Also, the dishonest, scavenger press, seeing temporary profit in sensational smut, proceeds to butcher the motion pictures to make a journalistic holiday. Motion-picture scandals are exaggerated and dwelt upon, given exorbitant space, and played up with pictures and banner heads.

Then again, certain despicable seekers for cheap and lurid publicity, in the motion-picture ranks, rush into print with their ideas, tales, suppositions and opinions.

Furthermore, the public, too, is in large part to blame. It is human nature to create an idol and then to tear it down. From time immemorial idols were made to be raised and shattered.

And so, as a result, a great industry is irreparably injured; the reputations of thousands of decent men and women are sullied; an entire community is dragged into the mire!

It is a colossal and unforgivable injustice! I have personally visited Hollywood many times. I am thoroughly familiar with the motion-picture

industry. I know as many of its people as anyone in the country. And this I can truthfully say:

Never have I seen the immoral conditions to which the newspapers refer. And while there are members of the motion-picture profession who are addicted to vicious practices, the men and women--as a whole--are as decent and self-respecting as the men and women of any other profession.

PHOTOPLAY is not posing as a defender of the motion pictures. It holds no brief to the purity of Hollywood. It prefers, in fact, to refrain from all discussion on the subject. But it can not sit by silently and behold both public and press besmirch with lies the entire rank and file of a great industry. This is why PHOTOPLAY has refused the recent frantic demands from newspapers for photographs of eminent actors and actresses, knowing the use to which they would be put.

Vice is to be found everywhere--in every profession and in every city in the world. The motion-picture profession is neither better nor worse than any other.

PHOTOPLAY asks nothing for motion pictures but justice--that simple, fine justice which the American public knows so well how to exercise.

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April 1922
James Quirk
PHOTOPLAY

Moral House-Cleaning in Hollywood:
An Open Letter to Mr. Will Hays

Dear Mr. Hays:

You have just accepted a position which makes you the representative head of the motion picture art and industry. You are the ideal man to occupy that position. Your traits of character and your proven ability, sanity,

directness and fearlessness qualify you for this great responsibility.

I am taking the liberty of writing you a letter; and the things I am going to say to you are the outgrowth of a six years undivided association with the motion-picture industry--its leaders, its directors, and its stars.

You are confronted by the biggest job in America. You hold in your hands, as a sculptor holds a piece of clay, an industry which wields perhaps a more direct and personal influence upon the public than any other in the United States.

It has become a necessity in the lives of many millions, and because of its vastness and influence, is almost a public utility.

You have it in your power to do a greater and finer service for this country than any other man today. You are, indeed, not merely face to face with a gigantic task--you have a sacred duty to perform as well.

In motion pictures, as in all great industries, there are undesirables--selfish vicious persons who work injury to everyone with whom they are associated.

There is the unscrupulous producer who, for a temporary profit, makes his appeal to the baser instincts in human nature.

There is the actor and the actress who live loose, immoral lives, and who thrive on scandal and lurid notoriety.

And there is the exhibitor who attempts to capitalize this scandal and to benefit by this notoriety. (In Los Angeles, while the press was at the height of a recent orgy of sensationalism, a local theater threw across its entrance a large canvas banner bearing the words: "I love you; I love you; I love you!" quoting a note which Mary Miles Minter wrote to Taylor, the murdered director.)

There are the self-appointed guardians of public morals, who forget the spirit of our form of government and in their frenzy of egomania, busy themselves in bringing about censorship, or exercise it in such an autocratic manner that compared to them, the kaiser was a benign and humble ruler.

Whenever a crime or a scandal connected with motion pictures has come to light, there have been those in various branches of the business who have at

once rushed in and sought, through one means or another, to profit by it at the expense of the industry's reputation, scattering lies and accusations and innuendoes broadcast.

These are the facts. What, then, can be done?

Viewing the situation broadly, I believe that what motion pictures need at the present time, more than anything else, is a moral house-cleaning. They need it for their own good, as well as the public's. And you are the one man who can bring this about. It is you alone who can rehabilitate the good name of a great industry which has been dragged through the mire.

First of all, you should call on producers to discharge all persons whose private lives and habits make them a menace to the industry. This is vital. When the Stillman scandal broke, the National City Bank dropped Stillman. Surely the picture industry can do as much for its own good name.

Furthermore, you should eliminate all those persons who are eager to take advantage of the sensational publicity offered by any motion-picture scandal which gets into the papers.

Moreover, in every motion-picture contract there should be a clause similar to the one in the new Goldwyn contracts, providing for the immediate discharge of any actor whose private life reflects discredit on the company.

Your problem is to restrain not only the exhibitor, but the producer and the actor as well.

It is a general moral house-cleaning that is needed.

Then there is another point. One of the cardinal reasons why scandals like the Arbuckle and Taylor cases are possible, is that the motion-picture business has built up great public characters, thus making them easy targets for sensational journalism.

This method of production has been wrong; for the publicity, advertising and expenditure should be spent on the pictures and not on the stars.

And here again you can help by focusing interest and attention on the art of motion pictures and not merely upon personalities.

Indeed, the time will probably come when personalities will be almost entirely obliterated, although you can never succeed in overshadowing the

individual ability of the really great actress and actor.

There is no need to go into the causes for the unfortunate condition of affairs which at present exists in the motion-picture industry. No one is directly to blame, for the industry and its problems are new, and certain recent results could not be foreseen and met. Both cause and effect are without precedent.

Perhaps everyone has been a little to blame--the producer, who sat apathetically by and did nothing; the actor and actress, who were suddenly loaded with riches, and sought to enjoy them without counting the cost; the exhibitor, who gave no thought except to the box office; the newspapers, who played up the scandals for personal aggrandizement; the public, which was willing, even eager, to believe whatever it heard or read.

But whatever the causes, the facts exist; and it is these which you, Mr. Hays, must face--and face fearlessly. The time has come to act, and I believe that you are capable of organizing the many factors of influence in America--producers, actors, directors, exhibitors, press and public--to join hands and work with you for a new ideal in motion pictures.

PHOTOPLAY, for its part, will refuse to print any personality story about any motion-picture star, who is notoriously immoral, or whose actions are such as to reflect unfavorably on the industry.

It is a Herculean task you have undertaken.

You are going to find in the motion-picture industry the same trouble that has always existed--selfishness and cut-throat methods. Side by side with men of the highest of principles, you are going to find men who are the scum of the earth.

But you will succeed. Neither you, nor anyone else will be able to make the motion-picture business perfect, any more than the railroad business, the steel business, the banking business, or the government is perfect.

After all, just as sorrow and hardship build up character, so out of these tribulations will come a stronger and better business.

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March 4, 1922

MOVIE WEEKLY

Movie Weekly's Stand on the Taylor Case

The tragic death of William D. Taylor, well-known Paramount director, a cultured, studious, and evidently quiet-living man, has shocked the motion picture colony and the general public.

The attitude of the picture folks is that of deep sorrow for the loss of one they esteemed. There is a bitter seriousness in the protest of the producing executives against the sweeping condemnation that is expressed via the newspapers. Jesse L. Lasky, Vice-President of Famous Players-Lasky; Samuel Goldwyn, President of the Goldwyn Pictures Corporation, and others, have banded together to get to the bottom of Taylor's death. No expense will be spared to prosecute the guilty one. No expense will be spared to right the entire picture colony--which, unfortunately, has been branded by this second disaster within so short a span of time--in the eyes of the public.

MOVIE WEEKLY takes the stand of non-partisanship. Motion pictures and everyone in them are our friends. The public is our friend.

The public surely wants to know about Mr. Taylor and what is going on out West. These reportorial details can be read in the papers from day to day.

It therefore ill behooves a weekly magazine to poach on newspaper ground. What MOVIE WEEKLY is going to do is to publish the life story of William D. Taylor. [This was reprinted in TAYLOROLOGY 23.]

We have authorized a well-known writer to gather this material for us and within the course of a few issues it will be run in from three to four installments.

MOVIE WEEKLY will not cast opprobrium on the motion picture players, or upon the picture colony. If there is to be anything said, let it come from the authorities. We are, therefore, expecting soon such a series from people well-known in the industry. This will give you the real truth of Hollywood

by those who know and are fearless enough to say what they know.

Out in Los Angeles, the TIMES, a local paper, rises to say: "Among the film people one can see delightful, romantic, wholesome domesticity on the one hand, or an amazing effrontery in free love on the other. There was one little lady at a hotel whose ideas were distinctly interesting. A frightful crash was heard at midnight and it appeared an irate husband has forcibly removed another man from her room via the window route."

Everyone admits that there is this cancerous eaten side of the film colony. But why rail at it? Wipe it out. That's what is going to be done at Hollywood. The Taylor tragedy, following in the footsteps of the Arbuckle case, has aroused the ire of every home-loving Hollywoodite that suffers in the sin shadow cast by such cases.

The whole trouble seems to be that the public has been fed up with the eulogistic stories about the stars, and judging from the sundry letters that come into this office, many fans actually believe them to be "little tin gods." They aren't. But, on the other hand, they aren't a black and thoroughly demoralized set.

At this writing, the Taylor mystery is unsolved. Much speculation is heard on all sides. We refuse to indulge in this pastime. William D. Taylor's life has been one of adventure and romance, and it will all be told in a vivid and dramatic style in his story as we will publish it in MOVIE WEEKLY.

We ask our readers not to turn radically against Hollywood and the motion picture people there. Keep your head during this crisis and don't say anything against any man or woman that will shame you when the Taylor mystery is finally solved.

We reiterate. Our stand in this case is that of a non-partisan. What is yours? Write and tell us. We are interested.

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May 1922

Some Results of the Late Upheaval

The murder of William Desmond Taylor stirred Hollywood more than the public realizes. Mr. Taylor was a popular and respected man, and until he was shot down in his apartment he had not figured in the colony gossip. And then the deluge of unfavorable publicity descended upon Hollywood and the film world in general. It was unfortunate that the names of Mabel Normand and Mary Miles Minter were brought into the case. When Joseph Elwell was killed in New York, the names of any women who happened to know him, and whom the police, at first, might have thought to be concerned, were not made public.

But the killing of Taylor seemed to furnish a good excuse for crying out, "Another movie scandal!" despite the fact that those who knew him at the studio declared that he was a decent, quiet, and cultured gentleman. Every amateur and professional reformer in the world seems bent on cleaning up the morals of the movie folk; as for the movie folk, they are determined to stand together and defend themselves against malicious and uncalled for attacks on their private lives.

The Screen Writers Guild was one of the first organizations to see the need of a better understanding with the public. Many of its members are men of international reputation who happen to be living in Hollywood. They feel that the public doesn't know the true situation and that the respectable persons who earn their living in the movies are being classed with the undesirables. Of course, there are undesirables. The movie people realize this better than the reformers and the producers are taking drastic steps to keep them out of the studios. A year will see some big changes in the studios, brought about by the companies themselves.

Shortly after the Taylor murder the Screen Writers Guild held a meeting, and the organization pledged itself to answer all unfair and unwarranted attacks on motion pictures. It also pledged itself to see that all excuses

for these attacks should be done away with. The silly gossip parties of Hollywood must go, and the writers have promised to work with the Women's Clubs and the civic authorities in Los Angeles to put a stop to the wholesale slanders that are circulated about the movies. Some of those who were present at the meeting were: Frank Woods, Jeanie Macpherson, June Mathis, Elinor Glyn, Eve Unsell, Julien Josephson, Thompson Buchanan, Louis Sherwain, Alan Dwan, Lois Zellner, Rob Wagner, Albert Shelby le Vino, Beulah Marie Dix, Francis Harmer, and Helen Christine Bennett.

Back issues of Taylorology are available on the Web at any of the following:

<http://www.angelfire.com/az/Taylorology/>

<http://www.etext.org/Zines/ASCII/Taylorology/>

<http://www.silent-movies.com/Taylorology/>

Full text searches of back issues can be done at <http://www.etext.org/Zines/> or at <http://www.silent-movies.com/search.html>. For more information about Taylor, see

WILLIAM DESMOND TAYLOR: A DOSSIER (Scarecrow Press, 1991)

* T A Y L O R O L O G Y *
* A Continuing Exploration of the Life and Death of William Desmond Taylor *
* *
* Issue 87 -- March 2000 Editor: Bruce Long *
* TAYLOROLOGY may be freely distributed *

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Contemporary Editorials Discussing the Taylor Case

What is TAYLOROLOGY?

TAYLOROLOGY is a newsletter focusing on the life and death of William Desmond Taylor, a top Paramount film director in early Hollywood who was shot to death on February 1, 1922. His unsolved murder was one of Hollywood's major scandals. This newsletter will deal with: (a) The facts of Taylor's life; (b) The facts and rumors of Taylor's murder; (c) The impact of the Taylor murder on Hollywood and the nation; (d) Taylor's associates and the Hollywood silent film industry in which Taylor worked. Primary emphasis will be given toward reprinting, referencing and analyzing source material, and sifting it for accuracy.

The two-hour special documentary on the Taylor case produced by A&E cable TV is scheduled to be broadcast on the evening of March 19, 2000. Check local program listing for the exact time.

Contemporary Editorials Discussing the Taylor Case

The following is a selection of contemporary newspaper editorials commenting on the William Desmond Taylor murder case.

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February 4, 1922

OMAHA BEE

A Tragedy of the Movies

The latest "release" from Los Angeles cinema colony is that of a thriller that promises to run through more than one reel. It is the tale of a murder, sordid, perhaps, in its intimate details, yet possessed of the one attribute dear to the producer's heart, that of mystery. How or in what manner it will end is just now beside the case. That wonderful community of abnormal personalities will continue to hold a fair place on the front page for some time yet because of this unpretty contribution to the record its habitues have made. Will H. Hays will find in it at least one of the minor problems he will have to deal with, although it is conceivable that the regulation of the private lives of the actors who disport before the camera is not included in the business management of the great industry. Unfortunate though it be, the assembling in more or less forced intimacy of considerable numbers of persons of both sexes whose code of personal behavior is not the rigid sort that pervades the general walk of life, is likely to produce results that shock the world by their nature. Nothing shown on the screen has so far exceeded in weirdness the things actually done by the movie players. Men and women in other walks of life have suffered by similar tragedies, but it is the movie stars' misfortune in such cases that millions of people had interest in them. Their every act almost, even those of personal conduct, are on a public stage.

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February 4, 1922

WICHITA EAGLE

Another Movie Scandal?

Another typical California murder has been staged in the movie colony. William Desmond Taylor, wealthy movie director, ex-husband of two [sic] women and alleged prospective husband of at least as many more, is dead of gunshot wounds, and police are questioning men and women known to have been on intimate terms with the director.

Several million-dollar names are being bandied about, and the stage seems to be all set for the interesting unraveling of another movie scandal.

Under the shadow of this tragedy, Fatty Arbuckle ought to be able to sneak away and become insignificant enough to escape further public notice.

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February 4, 1922

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

"How Different from the Home Life of our Dear Queen"

David W. Griffith, the moving picture producer, in expressing his regret that some one had shot William Desmond Taylor, also a producer, in his Los Angeles home, said that he hoped people would not be led to false ideas of moving picture domestic life and social ideals and would not unjustly criticize the moving picture colony in Los Angeles. He would be grieved if through false impressions anything discreditable to the screen profession prevailed to its injury in the public mind.

We believe that he need fear no such misfortune. The moving picture industry, as the public gets glimpses of it from time to time, seems to possess some delectable isle where the charm of life is never withered and only occasionally marked by some romantic murder and subsequent murder trial.

If sometimes the movies appear as unreal, it is only because we view them from the actualities of our own experience and do not know that they are interpretations of realities in the life of the moving picture artists. For

them there are swans on the lake, Russian wolfhounds stand beside the automobile, and whenever there is an evening party the ladies and gentlemen have a frolic in the marble pool in the pink moonlight, while the ju-ju birds bill in the cypress trees.

On this delectable island the law of cause and effect does not run. Prohibition is not a cause and abstinence is not an effect. Wherever the enchanted people go cocktails precede them and highballs follow them. Even death, when it enters, comes on velvet feet, with a Cecil De Mill composition and David Wark Griffith direction.

This is the life, as Mr. Griffith's publicity matter describes the "Orphans of the Storm," "when people went dancing, singing, loving, and taking, as they pleased. The lawless--but not loveless--city in that cyclonic last act. From the storehouse they took gold and silver and precious stones, from the storehouse they took satins and silks to make alluring--" It is much too much. We cannot go on. But what a life!

The director, having said good night to his faithful colored servitor, is alone in his beautiful house, reading Freud. Rare things of art and wealth surround him. A cocktail mixer stands at his elbow. Sunset glow. A dove in the red cedar calls to its mate in the willow. The Russian wolfhounds doze in their kennels. A beautiful lady in a beautiful car arrives, eating peanuts.

Peanut shells are all over the beautiful car. The handsome chauffeur sweeps them out while the director reads Freud to the beautiful lady in the twilight beside the cocktail shaker. Mae Tinee says that some low down realist, finding his reason shaken by the combination of beautiful lady eating peanuts and fatherly man reading Freud to her, was driven to murder. Possibly, but he never went to the movies much, or it would not have jarred him.

Nightfall and the brilliantly lighted house. Midnight and another beautiful lady casually stops for a good-night chat. The door bell rings, but otherwise it is a house of silence, because it is a house of death. One fatal shot has rung out in the night and shadowy mystery waves the curtains

as the sun comes up.

The Tribune sent Mr. Doherty to the Pacific coast to report the murders and other social advantages of that region, and he has been busy ever since. He was asked if he did not want to take a rest and come back home. He replied that he would resign first.

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February 5, 1922

MEMPHIS COMMERCIAL APPEAL

Movie Crimes Becoming Real

Surely is the city of pleasant make-believe in the luxuriant state of California coming to the attention of the nation through realities that are by no means pleasant. One crime seems to tread upon the heels of another in the great moving picture colony with each succeeding one more lurid and dispiriting than its predecessor. While one member of this community of luxury and license awaits his fate on a sordid charge of manslaughter another is mysteriously shot to death, and the details surrounding his murder seem to point to conditions even more ugly and sordid than the preceding one. Newspaper correspondents peeping behind the veil of mystery say that revelations in the newest tragedy will go beyond the drunkenness and sexual lubricity of the other one to the dismal depths of drug-crazed minds and bodies.

It would seem at least on the face of things as if sins of sexual license and violent purpose even in the make-believe are two-edged swords that can do damage to the wielder as well as to those for whom they are wielded. We have become more or less acquainted with the evils that such portrayals may work upon those who witness them, but have not know so much about the reflex action upon the portrayers. Psychologists and psycho analysts may argue the point as to whether the moral laxity of some of the pictures is the cause or is the effect of the moral turpitude of some of the

producers. But their argumentation will not alter the obvious fact that an unwholesome atmosphere seems to pervade this city of make-believe.

Time was, as is recorded in Holy Writ, when two cities of the Palestinian plains not so far from the Dead Sea so offended the Creator by their vices and concupiscences that He rained down fire and brimstone and destroyed them in their sins. Some modern cities, and among them this movie community of mimic life, dare also to tempt the wrath of the Supreme Being. They may have no such calamitous visitation as is recorded in Genesis, but they are at least bringing about the contempt of decent-minded people and by so doing are destroying the golden opportunity that is theirs. Besides, the guilty members of this colony, each and every one of them, are feasting themselves solely upon Dead Sea fruit.

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February 5, 1922
IDAHO STATESMAN

"Reel" Values

The real tragedy of William D. Taylor may eclipse in sensation any of the reel ones he directed. It involves murder and mystery, assumed names, actors and actresses of wide reputation, luxurious environments; in fact, all the necessary ingredients of the movie thriller.

There is an unfortunate side to it. We are likely again, as in the Arbuckle case, to have the private life of each of several prominent screen people uncovered and dissected. Many a man would blush, blameless as his past may actually have been, to have that past studied as Taylor's may be and as Arbuckle's was. Few people live to middle age without having been guilty of an indiscretion or two at which they are vexed in secret.

This engineer-actor-director who has gone by the name of Taylor may have been something of a Don Juan and, in the course of his moving picture life, much engaged. It may even be that this is not the worst that can be said of

him; but he is dead now and we would prefer to be charitable, though, charitable or not, we are, it seems, to have the facts thrust upon us. Perhaps they will leave us a little more disgusted with those who have contributed to our delight in the movies.

Taylor was successful as a director; that does not mean he was successful as a man. Many an actress thrills us; until we find, unexpectedly, to our sorrow, that she failed to live as well as she acted. A few more of these disillusionments and we may lose our respect for these hired entertainers who dance and mimic for our amusement. We have idolized them too much, heaped favors too high upon them, given them too high a status in our modern life. It may be about time to readjust ourselves and give them, in our minds, their proper and lower place.

The girl with the wind-blown hair and glowing cheeks one meets at the corner grocery, buying a yeast cake for her mother, may be better in soul and of more real use to the world than any of these actresses. The genial lad who wraps up our collars at the store may be as interesting, as likeable, as morally sound and as successful in the end as any director who, megaphone to mouth, has bellowed, "Action! Camera!"

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February 6, 1922
CHARLESTON GAZETTE

Crime and the News

A tragedy in the moving picture colony in Los Angeles, coming in the wake of the tragedy in a San Francisco hotel, in which performers were involved, again turns the searchlight on the industry and has a tendency to cast odium on the performers as a class and Hollywood as a place of their abode.

One has only to visit southern California and Hollywood to see the lure of the place. The climate is wonderful, it is not tropical, yet all the

exotic things to be found in the tropics are found in this comparatively temperate zone. But, a few days at the place will prove an eternal verity so that the atmosphere will get one as some lotus blossom deprives one of rational ideas and wafts them on the wave of emotions to pleasant dreams.

The "movie" colony is also one recruited from the ends of the world. The world's butterflies have assembled there, but, in addition, practical business men and legitimate performers of all kinds have loaned or sold their arts and energies to the making of pictures which has got such a hold on the public that the industry is said to be the fourth largest in the United States in volume of money spent on their making and showing.

It would be unfair to say that there is more immorality in the moving picture colonies than anywhere else in the country, although the setting would be perfect for excesses of all kinds. At times there are as many as 40,000 persons engaged in one way or another in the industry in Los Angeles and environs.

A few days ago a player and director was murdered. It was the first crime of a similar nature in the colony for years. The identity of the murdered man, his importance to the industry, and the fact that there is some mystery as to the identity of his slayer, have all the elements which would appeal to the scenario writers engaged in the industry. But the incident has again startled the critics, and, while there is no necessity, it seems to offer a brief for the industry, there are some facts that might be cited.

In the city of Charleston homicides are not unusual. The court records would show an astonishing number. A murder here is news which is relegated generally to a place of secondary importance, but California has a way of advertising itself which sometimes assumes the form of exploiting notoriety. In the present instance, as in the Arbuckle case, the industry of making pictures gets more notoriety than is deserved. It is very natural that there should occasionally be a scandal in a community as large as Hollywood, and it is just as natural that occasionally some hatred should find expression in one individual slaying another. We do not know the statistics relative to homicides in Los Angeles, and it is not our intention to magnify the number

in Kanawha county, but it would be interesting to print the facts. We are certain that there are less in Los Angeles than there are in Kanawha county although Los Angeles has half a million inhabitants.

The facts seem to be, however, that the public and the press give much importance to news items such as the killing of Taylor. But there is a defense for the tendency to print in detail the stories of such crimes. One is the public demand for the details. The press, purveyor of news, must have it to sell. One of the reasons why the newspapers of America today are the greatest mediums of advertising is because they are the most widely read mediums. If they ignored the news they would not be read. Pulitzer said that "crime was news," and a poll of all the people would probably prove that at this time the latest murder mystery of Los Angeles was discussed in more homes yesterday than was the morning sermon in the churches.

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February 6, 1922
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Moviedom's Garbage

William Desmond Taylor's murder has lifted the lid of moviedom's garbage can. The odor arising is not sweet. A filthy mess is being revealed as the police delve into the crime.

The murder is the climax of a series of revolting divorce cases, dope parties and other nasty affairs.

From Hollywood, center of the motion picture business, come many stories of orgies. Too many stars of the screen have been paraded before the public in a mantle of vice.

In a general way folk on "the inside" have known of these things. It has taken the Arbuckle case, the Valentino-Acker divorce suit and the Taylor mystery to lift the lid for the public gaze.

A portion of filmdom, at least, seems to need a good cleaning. The

capable and energetic Mr. Will Hays is the gentleman to administer it.

The movie business has been hurt as a result of the escapades of some stars. Cow-eyed "heroes" and star-eyed "heroines" have not lured crowds to the box offices as of yore. There are good reasons.

Movie stars have given us many of our pet illusions. But illusions fade when one reads of shining lights of filmdom being dragged through scandalous muck.

It is only fair to a large number of actors, producers and directors to point out that the individuals involved in the scandals are the minority.

Frequently they are of the class exploited into stardom because of favoritism, not because of ability to act. These persons believe what their press agents write about them. Inflated heads and disaster follow.

They have been the ones who have hurt the picture business. Parents don't care to see or to take their children to see on the screen in heroic roles men and women who have been involved in sordid cases.

Motion picture stars are public characters. They cannot afford to have private lives. They live in glass houses, constantly on exhibit. They are idols.

Some of these idols are proving to be clay. In picking these individuals out of the industry lies one of Mr. Hays's big opportunities. It is safe to predict Mr. Hays is broad visioned enough to realize this fact and to administer a spring cleaning.

The garbage of moviedom--even if it has been perfumed in the past--must be dumped overboard for the good of an industry that is needed to entertain millions.

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February 6, 1922
INDIANAPOLIS NEWS

Hollywood Happenings

The murder last week of a movie director, and the facts brought to light by the police inquiry, throw a light on the Hollywood colony that must be painfully unwelcome, especially at this juncture, to the colonists. There is no reason in the nature of things why there should be immorality in movie circles. In the film itself there is nothing wicked--unless indeed it is an evil film--nor need any wickedness mark its production. It would be most unfair to class all together, and to assume that all those connected with the business are pariahs.

The trouble seems to come from a combination of a low order of mentality and big salaries--as in the Arbuckle case. Few things are more dangerous than money in the hands of those who have no idea of its value, and not the slightest sense of the responsibility which its possession imposes. Undoubtedly there are many of these people who are not rich, but probably all expect to be, and also the pace is set by those who are rich. There do not seem to be any moral standards--hardly indeed a suspicion that such things exist.

When such influences operate in a restricted community composed wholly of movie people who know nothing except their trade, think of nothing else, and have no idea of any public opinion except that of the little community in which they live and work (and "play")--under such conditions shocking things are bound to occur. To an over-supply of money and an under-supply of brains one must look for an explanation of the happenings at Hollywood. There are rumors of the existence of a circle of so-called "esthetes" which would only make the situation worse. The murdered man in the latest case was, it is said, a student of Freud, while the studies of another member of the community seem to have been divided between Freud and the Police Gazette. Of course moral depravity is by no means unrepresented in the Hollywood colony.

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February 7, 1922
SACRAMENTO BEE

Clean-Up from Inside
Should be Movie Program

The murder of William Desmond Taylor, the film director in Los Angeles, has disclosed a story as unsavory as the details of the Roscoe Arbuckle case and rivaling that of the Thaw case of former years.

Even more prominent figures in filmdom, however, have been drawn into the mess, and the impression left with the general public is that the moral tone of life among the men and women of the screen resembles too closely that of decadent Rome.

Unless some drastic changes are made, the results are likely to be disastrous to the industry. A few more such malodorous incidents will result in such a wave of public indignation as may be ruinous to the business.

Wise producers have scented the danger, but, for the most part, the energy thus far disclosed, has been of a hunt for cover order, rather than an honest confession that some things were wrong and a cleaning up is needed.

Just lie low until the storm blows over, and then everything will resume its normal order, was the attitude of too many of the filmmakers after the arrest of Arbuckle.

This attitude becomes increasingly difficult of maintenance as the result of this new scandal.

If it is true that a vast majority of the people connected with the photoplay making are decent and respectable, now is surely the time for them to assert themselves.

One suggestion offered is that the Hollywood colony be closed, and that a new start be made at Long Island, New York, where no orgies have occurred, and where a church would be erected to give notice to the world that in this spot Arcadia would be reborn.

This sounds too much like a real estate scheme, and it does not in any way touch the heart of the situation.

It is people which make or mar the character of any spot, and if the Arbuckles and the Taylors are permitted to set the pace no little church

spire or change of location is going to help matters.

Proponents of this scheme should remember what Lincoln said about fooling the people.

Most of the trouble can be traced to the large sums of easy money which the motion picture industry has brought to individuals to whom wealth means license, and who can find only in abnormal or degrading sensations a real "kick" in life.

To put a restraint on them is the only way of safety for the moving picture industry.

If the restraint comes from the inside, so much the better.

But one way or another, it is going to be done. That cannot be doubted.

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February 7, 1922

NEW YORK EVENING MAIL

Movies and Morals

It is not fair to indict a whole profession for the sins or crimes of a few of its members. But that is precisely what public opinion is now doing in the case of the moving picture actors and actresses. The recurrence of scandals in which highly priced stars and directors figure has bitterly incensed clean-minded people throughout the country. There is something more than moral indignation in that attitude, too. The average patron of the pictures comes to look with something like affection on his or her favorite players. When these players prove unworthy of admiration in their private lives, the public has a sense of betrayal.

It is quite possible that there are no more instances of marital infidelity or general immorality among these personages of the screen than there are among stevedores or scrubwomen. But that is beside the issue. Those who are in the public eye owe public morality a greater debt than those who are not, because their example can do so much harm.

We do not suppose that the men at the head of the moving picture industry can secure nothing but Galahads and their feminine counterparts for the pictures they make. But it is quite possible that there are conditions in the industry that could be easily reformed. One of the most prominent men in it, for instance, thinks the Hollywood colony life is bad for the character of those taking part in it. They live and talk nothing but pictures, he says, and their standards of conduct are apt to be self-determined. This seems very like commonsense, and it suggests the abolition of the colony.

A higher ideal of their profession's power would also help the weak sisters and brothers in it. Probably nothing in the world will help the really vicious ones. but they without doubt are comparatively few. There is an old saw, "Let me write the songs of a nation and I care not who makes its laws." If the picture people could be brought to realize how far that half-truth could be said of their own profession, they might measure up better to their opportunities.

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February 7, 1922

KANSAS CITY STAR

The Defendant in the Case

It may be that the man who committed the Hollywood murder will escape, but Hollywood can't. Hollywood as a community, as a social condition, as a moral delinquency, stands indicted.

The conquest of easy fortune has much to answer for. Men and women intoxicated by money, the uses of which they never had learned through the process of earning it, came to believe that the finery they wore before the camera really had translated them into persons of condition and privilege. They made themselves into a class, a species of order, and set up a new code for themselves which repudiated all the obligations recognized and observed

by society. To have more money than your abilities or service entitle you to, to spend it in wild excesses, to reject the restraints of decency and outrage all public sensibilities, was to be approved a member of this order. If you passed all these tests, you might, as a mark of special favor, be permitted, if it suited your taste and convenience, to live under your own name.

This is the class that has branded the motion picture industry in Hollywood. It is without principle, character or morals, and but for the Midas touch of the films would be washing dishes and peeling potatoes. It isn't intelligent, it isn't capable, it isn't profitable to the industry to which it has attached itself. But it has been lavishly overpaid in the past--a condition now fortunately drawing to an end--and with this unaccustomed wealth it has ruined itself and half ruined the screen drama.

What else could have been expected? Shallow girls and uneducated men, raised suddenly from poverty to riches, without the balance of character, without culture, moral background or social responsibility, will make a swift and sure descent to the level from which they came. You can't make an eagle of a crow by sticking an eagle's feathers on him.

The real defendant in the Hollywood murder is the motion picture industry. The producers will have to recognize that it is their business to maintain certain standards or to suffer the inevitable consequences in the loss of public patronage.

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February 8, 1922

LOUISVILLE TIMES

The Visible Kiss

The transmission of kisses by symbols is one of the oldest practices known to the human race. When two lovers were separated by some cruel fate which forbade the pressing of lips to lips they have always devised an

artifice by which osculation might be typified. If they eyed each other throw a chink in the wall, like Pyramus and Thisbe they kissed the stones which separated them in token of what might happen if fortune were more kind. If the cave man wanted to send his inamorata a sign to the effect that he was kissing her in spirit, he scratched an "x" on a slab of stone and pitched it into the cavern where her stern father held her in captivity. When a Kaffir chieftain wished to thrill the heart of a dusky princess with the sentiment of kisses by "hopeless fancy feigned," he sent her the head of one of his retinue with a thorn piercing the lips.

With the advance of civilization, the symbols became more refined. We outgrew Salome's idea of kissing the head of John the Baptist instead of kissing his lips while they were yet warm. Then we began kissing the finger tips from afar, and, later with the dawn of commercialized sentiment, we resorted to the distich which used to be wrapped around the "candy kiss." Then came the blotch at the end of a perfumed note, labeled "a kiss," and finally the "x," which reverted back to the cave man.

The algebraic symbol, "x," stands for the "unknown quantity"; but, in modern love letters it has no hidden meaning. Indeed, it is highly obvious, as witness the chain of "x's" which Mary Miles Minter, the movie actress, strung across the bottom of a note which she wrote to William Desmond Taylor. Having piteously denied that she was enamored of the slain motion-picture director, she confessed all when confronted by her symbolized kisses.

Love is akin to murder in the sense that it "will out," and one of the surest indications of its existence is the penchant of lovers to symbolize their kisses on paper. The "x" is the usual form employed, and is more definite and unmistakable than the "o's" which some of the lovelorn use. All hieroglyphics, however, are resorted to, and, in this wise detectives gain many a clue which might otherwise remain undiscovered. Love, like nature, "speakes a varied language," but there is an element of rashness in some of Cupid's epistolary records which frequently leads ardent writers into court. Kisses are best placed as nature intended them to be. On paper they often leave an unsavory mark; to the lips they can only leave their imprint on the

heart.

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February 9, 1922
ST. PAUL PIONEER-PRESS

That Jazz Funeral

Is everything connected with the motion picture industry so light and frivolous that even the funeral service for William D. Taylor in a church was looked upon as an entertainment? Nothing more scandalous could be imagined than the state of mind of the throng that milled about the house of worship, heedless of interrupting the reverential ceremony with shouting and laughing, pushing and shoving for a chance to get a better view.

Even the presence of death could not take away the levity with which that great amusement business is associated because of the Arbuckle case, the Pickford and Chaplin divorces and other revelations of life in the movie colonies. The movie people have brought that contempt upon themselves.

The usefulness of many members of that industry and the prosperity of the industry itself will be ruined, if the public gets the idea that conditions behind the scenes are as bad as they are painted and are growing worse. The movie magnates cannot afford to forget that most of their patrons are decent and respectable men, women and children.

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February 9, 1922
HONOLULU ADVERTISER

The Latest Movie Scandal

When the Arbuckle scandal with all its sickening details was given front page position for several weeks, the movie world, it was then believed, was

in for a thorough cleansing.

People prominent in the motion picture industry were loud in their denunciation, not only of what Arbuckle was alleged to have done, but of the whole kit and caboodle of screen people whose idea of life seems to be predicated upon having what is more commonly known as "a good time" and not caring a whoop in hades how far they go in their efforts to obtain it.

The press of the whole country recounted incident after incident to show that such occurrences as the one that made Arbuckle the defendant on a manslaughter charge, had taken place in the movie colonies time and again, and that certain New York hotels had reeked with such performances put on by motion picture actors and actresses.

And now comes another scandal in the movie world. William D. Taylor, one of the most prominent men connected with America's fourth greatest industry, is found dead, and when the police investigation begins to show that the man's death might have been the result of certain unsavory matters, powerful interests of the motion picture world endeavor to direct the inquiry into certain lines to prevent an extension of the investigation in other directions.

The motion picture world is just as badly in need of cleansing as it was when the Arbuckle scandal broke. There is something rotten that must be cut out of the industry, or the business is going to get into worse repute than it is now.

Maybe Will Hays' connection with the industry will have some effect on it. Hays cannot--and will not--allow his name to be identified with an industry that is so honeycombed with filth as the motion picture business has been shown to be.

The public is not going to continue to patronize the movies if it has to be made to look upon the faces and the antics of men and women whose private lives are known to be what revelations of the last several months have shown.

It is all well enough for the public to cry out against the lurid "serials" which are said by some to be the cause of youthful depravity. But how about the big "feature" films in which appear screen people whose names

carry odium?

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February 9, 1922

ALBANY HERALD

A Movie Housecleaning Needed

The motion picture industry must have a thorough housecleaning, started from within, if it is to save itself from the destructive effect of added scandal such as the Arbuckle and Taylor cases. A few more such nasty messes served up to the public will disgust decent-minded people to the extent that the producers and exhibitors will feel it where it will hurt them the most--in the pocketbook.

The trouble seems to be that there is, at the very source of motion-picture supply, a distorted and twisted moral sense that weaves its sinuous, sensual way throughout almost the entire industry. We do see some clean, moral pictures, it is true, but they are the exception rather than the rule.

Some time ago it was announced with a great fanfare of trumpets that the motion picture magnates, or at least a controlling element among them, had come to the decision to eliminate the "sex stuff" from the motion picture world, realizing that it was in a fair way to tear down the industry. The announcement was hailed with delight by clean-minded movie fans. But little difference has been seen in the average run of pictures since that momentous "decision" was made.

There has been much lament among women's club organizations, church bodies and similar circles, because of the lowered moral tone of the present generation. Immodesty in dress, cigarette-smoking and whiskey-drinking among women, loose actions and looser talk among the younger people of both sexes--in fact, the entire trend of life among so-called "smart society," as well as its imitators, are some of the signs of the times. There is no doubt that the motion picture has had much to do with this lowered moral tone. It is

impossible for young men and women, boys and girls of the impressionable age, to go night after night to the movies and see these things enacted on the screen, without having their moral sense perverted. Immodest, free-and-easy, devil-may-care, actually immoral scenes are shown in such matter-of-fact manner that youth of the adolescent age cannot fail to take away a corresponding outlook on life.

And as to the effect on the actors themselves, who daily have to act these scenes, is it surprising that they, too, showed have a lowered moral standard? As long as motion picture actors and actresses have to play up the animal passions and the immoral lives that are so often featured on the screen, there should be no surprise when the Arbuckle and Taylor scandals arise to cast a damning shadow on the entire industry.

If the motion picture world wants to save itself from disaster, it must have a housecleaning, beginning at the center and extending to the circumference--a housecleaning that will take in the cellar and garret, and all floors between.

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February 10, 1922

CLEVELAND PRESS

Hush

Motion picture interests are much aroused over the Taylor murder. Those who have money invested see in this latest Hollywood scandal the prospect of losing large sums. New York is therefore heard from, and we suddenly swerve from talk of a million-dollar reward to the soft-pedal, the hush-hush.

What's a small thing like a murder when a lot of money is involved?

As a matter of fact--looking at it from a purely cold-blooded business point of view--what should be done is first to exert every power possible toward clearing up the mystery, and then to conduct a wholesale firing of everyone in Hollywood whose personal life can't bear up under the test of

common decency.

The theory that the industry depends on the star is bunk. With every actress and actor of easy virtue canned, with a moral standard set up and inexorably enforced, there would within a year be produced an entirely new set of players who through proper training could quickly win their way to the hearts of the movie fan.

The season of the pink nightie and the shot-in-the-arm has passed.

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February 11, 1922

CHATTANOOGA NEWS

A Number of Things

The scandals of Hollywood have been renewed. It seems such a pity that the moving picture, which has within its powers the most graphic reproduction of life in the calendar of the arts, must be smirched with loose lives and low morals. The occurrences in which "Fatty" Arbuckle, Mabel Normand, Mary Miles Minter and other stars have been involved, seem to us a very definite reflection of loose-moraled films, which gloss over vice for the gratification of the lower instincts. The concomitant of the seductive sex picture is an inevitable reaction on the character of the people engaged in their making.

Will Hays has a big job on his hands. If he really wishes to purify the movies, he has plenty to do. Let him change the character of films--remove sex for sex' sake. The finest stories in the world are clean and intensely interesting. We had rather read Charles Dickens or Alfred Tennyson than Guy de Maupassant or Boccaccio. Life in Hollywood fits Macbeth's description of his own career, "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

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February 11, 1922
SALT LAKE TELEGRAM

Pot Calling Kettle Black

With each succeeding day producing new gossip concerning life in California's film colony, it is to be hoped that the Taylor murder mystery, which has baffled the coast police for a week, will soon be solved. The speculation and gossip which goes with the effort to solve the mystery is bad for California and the motion picture industry for the reason that it is general and not confined to the specific issues of the case.

A solution of the mystery is necessary to clear the air and to separate the true from the false. Unfortunately the whole motion picture colony is under investigation for something which concerns only a few members of the profession. The East has raised its voice in shocked tones in an effort to move the industry from California to New York, as if a mere shifting of location could change the prevailing morals.

And when it comes to morals are we to judge the entire profession by the individual acts of the few? We know that the industry includes big men and pure women and we do not think we are far wrong when we say that the greater part of the colony is comprised of these people. Even if they were not, we could hardly change the morals by moving the industry eastward. Moral cleansings must come from within and a complete change would necessitate beginning all over again.

Still we do not admit that the morals of the film people are worse than those in other walks of life. In the case at issue we have heard brokers and business men mentioned, but no long haired reformer has risen to cry out for a moral cleansing of the business world. The fact of the matter is that questionable morals creep into every walk of life. They seldom prevail, as a general rule, but isolated cases of immorality may be attached to every art and every profession known to our people

Film stars are essentially public idols. They are constantly before the

gaze of the people. They are known by name and face to more people than any other class. For this reason their actions are subject to closer scrutiny than those of people who are not so widely known. No doubt this is the reason why the occasional sins of members of the profession claim nationwide attention, when the same deeds would go practically unnoticed in another walk of life. Judgment of the film colony should not be based on what any individual member of it has done. A solution of the Taylor mystery will help to remove many of the libels which have been attached to the profession by gossip and speculation, and before we move the industry to New York, let us have some assurance that the metropolis is free of the things it condemns in California.

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February 11, 1922
SANTA BARBARA PRESS

Be Fair to Movie Folks

Of hundreds of thousands of men and women engaged in the moving picture industry some are characterless, immoral, and unspeakably bad. Because success in their business depends in large measure on the popularity of producers, directors and actors, unusual efforts have been made to bring and keep their names before the public. Keenest publicity men, who know and practice every trick of the trade, make the most of any incident the publication of which may add luster to the particular star in whose interest they are employed. Amongst no other class is there so much personal advertising. Everybody knows the leaders and there is a peculiar interest in all persons associated with the movies. Whatever they do, everything that befalls them, because the movie folks have been so much advertised and are so well known, has a "news value" entirely out of proportion with the real significance of the incident. Whether what they have done is good or bad--and particularly if bad--a public interest or curiosity is aroused which the

newspapers feel bound to recognize. What might happen in another circle and arouse nothing more than a morning's gossip over neighborhood back fences, if the principals happen to be of the movies receives front page space in the newspapers of two or three continents. It becomes a subject of world interest. Therefore so much scandal from Hollywood, the world's movie capital. Almost daily we read about some movie queen or film hero having done something which ought not have been done, until we begin to believe the life of all of them consists in such acts. And we condemn the entire hundreds of thousands because of the deeds of the few. There are bad ones amongst the movie folks. But there are many who are not bad--and surely some who are good.

It is futile to condemn a class or sect or nationality or race. Many families have their black sheep. Churches often are forced to deal with hypocrites. But we do not condemn the whole because of the faults of one or a few. Let us be as fair with the movie folks. "Fatty" Arbuckle is no more representative of the morals of the movie profession than Arthur Burch is of real estate dealers. William Desmond Taylor was not the first man whose death revealed the secret of a double life. Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford were not the first couple whose marriage might not have been legally solemnized but for Nevada divorce courts.

Let us think of the thousands working in the movies whose lives are possibly all that we would wish our own to be--innocent and wholesomely honest--and have consideration for them. And a little charity to the others may win reward as a Christian virtue.

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February 12, 1922

MEMPHIS COMMERCIAL APPEAL

Hollywood and Modern Paganism

Two tragedies in the moving picture world during the past few months

have brought about a revelation of moral conditions of paleolithic primitiveness in that habitat of mimicry and misapplied mirth. Workaday people have stood aghast at the stories of Sybaritic indulgence and Paphian license in the lives of some of these heroes and heroines of the screen. What has been told in the daily press is all the more shocking because it concerns the persons of those who have been the idols of millions of their countrymen. The disillusionment thus brought about has been almost as depressing as has been the shock to moral sensibilities. From many mouths that once came paeans of praise and admiration now come bitter and contemptuous execrations.

Right now almost everybody who is anybody, and some who are not are giving voice to theories as to why conditions should be as they are in this moving picture colony, and nearly as many are suggesting remedies both drastic and merciful. Unaccustomed wealth and the opportunity it offers for self-indulgence, coupled with lack of knowledge in some of its new found possessors as to the better things it could procure, have made it a curse rather than a benefit. Creating sensations in crimes of sex and violence, some of the screen stars have sought sensations of the same sort. Evil feeds upon evil until the appetite for normal pleasure and happiness becomes vitiated and tasteless.

Decensus averni facilis. Yea, verily, is this the tragedy of bad beginnings. But bad beginnings are a thing for which blame may be placed on others than the victims, and we say this in no sense of extenuation.

Defenders of this modern Paphos of the Pacific Coast insist that life there is no worse than it is in other communities of inordinate wealth and idle luxury, and they are to a certain extent right. But even so, they offer in this apology neither justification nor mitigating circumstance. It is true that among too many of the newly rich whose minds have not been seasoned by acquaintance with the best thoughts, or whose mental processes have not been fortified by the logic of the highest philosophy, there have grown up cults and coteries of new thought and ultra modern sentiment. With wealth has come a desire for seeming refinement, and the short cuts that have been

taken towards a specious culture have led to the abodes of dilettante poetasters and parlor philosophasters. There novelty has been enshrined over truth, and the quest for what is new by the strange paradox of ignorance is leading back to most primitive and barbaric thought.

The great trouble with certain mercenary motion picture producers is that they either have been poisoned with this supposedly new thought or else have been capitalizing it for their financial profit. They have gotten together companies of actors, some of whom have had no higher view of life than could be obtained by associations between the midnight and the dawn. They, too, in the belief that familiarity with this modern rot meant culture, have made fetiches of individual assertiveness and sexual predominance. And in this connection we are much impressed with the fact that the book brought back to the slain picture director by the young woman actress, whose name has been mentioned in the case, was a volume of Freud. Right now this German exponent of subconscious and unconscious thought and sexual omnipotence is the fad of all modern novelty seekers, and we are not in the least surprised at his currency in Hollywood.

But Freud should not carry the whole blame for all the faddist cults of pale minds and prurient desires. With his psycho analysis resting heavily upon sex stimulation this new high priest of the psychic world came at a time when appetites for pornographic nourishment had become dull and jaded. A long line of caterers to such vicious tastes had preceded him, and he merely gave a new stimulation to a tired sense. French novelists before and after Gautier had made of sex and end and aim of existence, and they had done so in ways that were insidiously fascinating and attractive. The same purpose inspired the school of blatant new thought in Germany and Scandinavia, although its leaders were much more direct and much more brutally frank.

Haputmann and Sudermann looked into the dark and decaying corners of the world with distinctive Teutonic eyes and they set their followers to thinking in terms of social unrest and revolt. Ibsen came as the liberator for those who idly regarded the most sacred obligations of marriage, home and social duties. For a time this Norwegian dramatist was on the lips of all the

faddists and dilettante philosophers. He brought a message of hope to those who could conceive nothing higher in life than their own conveniences and the gratification of their own pleasure. In Russia, Tolstoi, for all of his wonderful talents; Dostoievsky, in a less potent way, became voices of protest against conventions and usages that, even considering their errors and imperfections, had made for the moral progress of the world.

In our own country Walt Whitman and, to a lesser extent because less known, some of our novelists and playwrights have sought to throw off restraint and assert their view of individual omnipotence. And over in England George Bernard Shaw with a facile and ready pen has been inveighing against almost everything that is merely because it is and appealing for all this is not merely because it is not. For the majority of these social revolutionists and moral anarchists the impelling thought has seemed to be to shock their way into recognition. They have gained audiences and a following chiefly because it has been thought that it was smart to be identified with some ism or some movement to rearrange the world in any manner so that it differed from the prevailing mode.

And it has been to audiences of this sort rather than to sound and healthy minded people that the picture purveyors have mostly catered. In the matter of sex the modern love cults and free thought exponents have turned their faces back to pagan days, when phallic worship was enshrined. Hired at enormous salaries both to minister to and to live in this pagan spirit what wonder then that many of these motion picture actors and actresses, some of whom are but half literate, have shocked the moral sensibilities of the nation? Would it not have been a miracle had it been otherwise?

So that, while pouring hot words of wrath or sneering expressions of scorn upon these unfortunate victims of an ill good fortune, let us ask ourselves if the nation itself, or, at least, a part of it, does not bear some responsibility for what is now being revealed. We seek not to exonerate nor even to extenuate Hollywood by saying that it is the terrible but logical result of all the so called new thought that has poisoned the minds of too many others outside of its precincts. Who can deny that Hollywood is an

effect rather than a cause of the modern paganism that thinks of itself as being a new morality?

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February 13, 1922

MEMPHIS NEWS-SCIMITAR

The Intimate Image

The public will have but slight sympathy for the film stars implicated in California's recent scandal in the metropolis of the motion picture world.

They are not entitled to sympathy. It is amazing that persons who have spent years in bringing themselves prominently before the public, making their names and faces household words wherever the motion picture is patronized, should feel so slight a responsibility to the patrons who have made their success possible.

It is amazing that they should feel so slight a responsibility to their co-workers in the industry--those who have sought to preserve their reputations clean and their names above reproach.

The frequency with which such episodes occur is convincing evidence that there must be a reformation in the motion picture industry. The public does not fail to associate the reputation of the actor with the character that the actor portrays.

Since it is the business of the actors to secure as much publicity as possible, it is not only necessary but imperative that their lives and daily conduct shall be in accord with the life one finds in the average American home.

The motion picture is a very intimate thing. It has been developed to such an extent that the audience is made to feel the physical presence of the actors on the screen. This feeling has been made possible by the development of the mechanics of the business, and the lesson that the actor must learn is that people will not patronize the image if the individual in reality is one

whom they would not desire to associate with in actual life.

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February 13, 1922

SANTA ANA REGISTER

Should Order a Clean-Up

The moving picture people are again on the defensive. Again? No--yet.

For it has been months since they have been in a position to feel at ease concerning the public's attitude toward them.

One need not recount the various scandals that have kept the moving picture people on the defensive. For years much of the public's criticism was launched at the character of films produced; not it is launched at the character of moving picture actors.

And the public has a right to demand that the lives of moving picture stars be clean. Of course, the same demand is a legitimate demand upon the personnel of any group of people in the public eye. But particularly is it true that moving picture producers and all of those whose names become by-words in the families of the country should be men and women of good moral character. It is important to the movie industry for the reason that children, as well as others, idealize the stars of the screen. Let the star fall, and the ideal is shattered, and no man or woman can estimate the damage that can be done in such a crash.

If we may judge the temper of the American people today, those who invest large sums of money in movie production stand a risk of loss unless in making their contracts the producers take into consideration the moral standing of the stars.

In the period through which the screen industry is going at this time, the men and women who are engaged in it and whose manner of living may be above reproach, have to suffer. There is nothing unusual about that; in this life it is the common thing that the innocent suffer with the guilty. In

this instance, the duty of the innocent is to show no mercy for the guilty. Public officials in Los Angeles are hinting that powerful interests in the movie world have ordered that mouths be closed lest the disclosures in the investigations into the murder of William Desmond Taylor bring additional discredit upon the movie industry. The order should be for a complete clean-up, and until there is a complete clean-up, until the heads of the industry set adrift all moral derelicts who may be connected with the industry, the movie colonies can expect to be looked upon with suspicion and without sympathy.

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February 14, 1922

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Persecuting the Movies

Lacking real clues to explain the mystery of the murder of William Desmond Taylor, the motion-picture director, public curiosity has turned ravenously upon the private affairs of the movie actors.

Not only have the innermost facts of the life of the murdered man been thrown to the winds, but every young girl who knew Taylor by sight seems to be considered legitimate prey. Private papers found in the apartments of the murdered man have been shouted from the housetops. With a bloodhound ferocity the pack-and-cry is in full pursuit of every stain in the life of everyone connected with the motion-picture industry.

It seems cruel and unnecessary that the letters of young girls should be ruthlessly flung to the world to read for no other reason than the slim excuse that they were found in the house of the murdered man. There is no pretense on the part of anyone that these missives have any possible bearing upon the murder mystery.

That some very young girl in the glow of a romance should write, "I love you; I love you; I love you," to a man old enough to be her father is no very

terrible indictment. In any event, there is no reason why she should be exposed to scorn, ridicule and disgrace--just because the man to whom they were addressed happened to fall a victim to an assassin's bullet.

Not only have these letters been pitilessly and mercilessly displayed to the public; but some of them have been printed in such a way as to leave the most vicious possible inferences. Against these nasty inferences the young girls in question have no defense. It is, for them, a case of "Be damned if you do; be damned if you don't." The only possible explanation they could make would be to lay still barer their innermost private secrets.

In the opinion of The Times the public has no right to any papers or letters in this or any other case that does not have a direct and official connection with the untanglement of this mystery; unless they would, for instance, be considered proper evidence in a murder case on trial.

The doctrine that every private letter and every secret of every kind found in a house where a crime has been committed should be published is a dangerous one. There are few who have not written letters, who have not, in fact, had experiences that they would shrink from seeing on the public billboards.

The fact that the girl writers of the letters happen, in this case, to have been young, beautiful and world-famous does not take away their rights. Their fault was to fail to recognize that persons in the public eye must suffer from restrictions as to their conduct in private life which are not imposed upon individuals "to fame and fortune unknown."

The Times is not impelled to protest against the procedure in this instance because those concerned happen to be connected with one of our most important industries. It is not a question of economics or business, but one of common justice.

The Times has always refused to suppress news. The public is entitled to know the legitimate and relevant facts about this and all other matters of genuine public interest, even though these facts cause discomfort.

But The Times does contend that to drag the bottom of the sea for every shred and putrid remnant of gossip and scandal affecting every person who had

a speaking acquaintance with a murdered man is unjust, outrageous, unsafe, unethical, ungenerous--and mighty bad business.

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February 15, 1922

CHARLESTON NEWS AND COURIER

Hollywood and Mr. Bryan

What will be the effect upon the movie industry of recent events in the movie world continues to be an interesting subject for speculation. Various opinions are being expressed, but the general idea seems to be that the public will continue to worship its screen idols just as fervently as before and perhaps a little more fervently, if that be possible.

Nevertheless, we note that in New York the other day mention of Mary Pickford's name brought a volley of hisses. Hence it appears that there are some people who are not as kindly disposed towards Miss Pickford as they were some time ago. It is rather interesting, too, to observe that a big newspaper, which used to issue every Sunday a movie magazine devoted mainly to pictures of movie stars, has now abandoned this supplement and is being commended by man of its readers for its action.

To jump from discussion of these matters to Mr. William Jennings Bryan may seem queer and illogical, but it isn't. The things that are now coming out about the movies contribute to a movement which is surely taking form in this country and in which Mr. Bryan is certainly interested because he is its natural and logical head--a great reform movement aimed against the looseness of these times, against jazz, modern dances, liquor, lack of Sunday observance, Hollywood, scantily clad chorus girls, cabarets, sex plays, agnosticism, Stillman cases, etc., etc.

Some may think it almost incredible that in this sort of thing there is the making of a first class political issue, but stranger things have happened. There were not many people a decade ago who were ready to believe

that national prohibition was just around the corner.

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February 15, 1922

FRESNO REPUBLICAN

Feminism or Logic?

Another example of confused logic in dealing with public affairs is that in an Eastern women's gathering reported yesterday. Club women refused to support a resolution to censor motion pictures that contain the photographs of Mabel Normand or Mary Miles Minter. This line of attack on the pictures might have carried had it not been for the brand of feminism that was injected into the discussion. The resolution was defeated because, it was declared, not Miss Normand or Miss Minter were responsible for the character of the pictures nor of the movie colony life now under discussion, but the managers and directors of the pictures.

Possibly true, and yet what of it?

If the medium through which we know of the bad movie life and the medium through which we are shown objectionable photo drama are the pictures of women whose lives have been involved in notorious incidents, are not the treatment of these pictures of these women the proper and the sole means of dealing with these unknown directors and managers?

What are the face and form of Mabel Normand but a lay figure upon which the work of the director is hung?

If Mary Miles Minter is a responsible part of a photodrama, then boycott of the picture may properly punish her. If she is an irresponsible part of the picture, will the boycott of the picture injure her any?

It is a question of emphasis.

To women who think that feminism is the issue, any criticism of any woman in the world is an error to be fought.

But if right and wrong, or good or bad policy is the issue, then men and

women, irrespective of sex, must be dealt with as factors in this complicated system of rights and wrongs that we must work with.

We don't believe in official censorship of movies. We do believe in unofficial, popular censorship of them. But any censorship, should be sensible censorship.

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February 16, 1922
RUTLAND HERALD

The Films and the Murder

The newspapers which connected the names of Mary Miles Minter and Mabel Normand with the recent mysterious death of William Desmond Taylor may be responsible for the almost immediate decline of popularity in films with which these women's names are connected, but they are merely responsible for uttering the facts, not for the facts themselves.

The public does its own censoring more or less, but, after all, is there any reason why the Normand and Minter films should be barred from the screen as was done in Lynn recently?

No stretch of supposition has so far set up any personal connection between the director's death and these actresses. No trial has been held. It would seem at least fair to wait until there are some definite facts to go on before their productions are blacklisted or boycotted.

Also, some of the newspapers rather overdid the Arbuckle business--without much evidential fact to go on. The mistake ought not to be repeated.

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February 17, 1922
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Cleaning up Movie-Land

Vested interests in existing reputations naturally are resisting publicity in the Hollywood affair. Various pundits of the movie world are busily explaining that virtue reigns supreme there and meanwhile we have an exhibition of official confusion and helplessness in the investigation of the Taylor murder which speaks volumes. The authorities are like babes in the forest of rumor which sprang up so suddenly when Taylor was found dead in the heart of the great movie colony. In the hubbub, the most conspicuous of the suspects, Sands, seems to have disappeared as completely as if he were evaporated. No one knows anything of any value about Taylor and his friends whom everyone knew. It is the sort of situation which starts a detective story auspiciously, but it is doing the movie profession and industry no good.

We should recommend less protesting of virtue and innocence and more candid confession of conditions which call for strong treatment. The trial of an individual or individuals for the murder of Taylor might be costly to profit making reputations, but it would help clean house and in the long run it would enable the industry or profession to get out of the quicksand of vice and lawlessness, to a firm footing on hard work and clean living. Other and better founded popularities could be built up and such mishaps as have occurred in recent years among the favorites of the screen could be diminished or avoided. Conditions revealed at Hollywood are impossible for any profession to survive and the quicker they are expelled from the world of moving picture art the better for all concerned. Bitter medicine will have to be taken, but it will have to take it.

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February 18, 1922

SAN FRANCISCO JOURNAL

A Public Duty

Upon District Attorney Woolwine of Los Angeles rests a heavy responsibility. Practically speaking, the fate of the moving picture industry of the South is in his hands. If it is to live, it must be purged of its immoral element, and with the district attorney rests the burden of the legal end of the task.

The good people of America are aroused to demand a day of better things. They have opened the doors of their lives to this attractive form of entertainment, but they demand protection from the evil thoughts that are daily spread before their children. It is not the job of the district attorney to censor the films, but it is his job to run down the crime that has flourished like the deadly Upas tree. He should know the influences he has to fight in unearthing crime, and he should make the public acquainted with them. If there be a conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice, he should ferret it out and exterminate it.

Upon the unflinching performance of the prosecutor's duty rests the only hope of clearing up the Taylor murder mystery, and upon that contingency rests the prospect of setting the movie house in order. No greater calamity could befall its real best interests than to leave this thing undone. The public will be satisfied with nothing less than thorough housecleaning.

When producers find out that it does not pay to flout public opinion, they will quit doing it. When stars pass into sudden eclipse upon the breaking of scandal or crime over them, the hazard of having huge sums of money tied up in their discredited films will give the producers a strong incentive to cultivate a line of talent that can be depended upon not to spoil their futures by unseemly conduct.

The safest way for the producers to avoid a tyrannical censorship is to produce films that do not need a censor.

* * * * *

February 26, 1922

TACOMA LEDGER

Gets Cocktails too Easily

"Los Angeles gets its cocktails too easily and it has too many producers who think that the evil things in their minds were implanted by public demand. These two influences have worked havoc with scores of fine young people who have invaded the kaleidoscopic realm of many marvels," says an observer in commenting upon the Hollywood scandals which have lately attracted the attention of the country.

It is not a good thing for any person to "get his cocktails too easily." In other words, it is not usually well for the average person to be able to obtain even the good things of life without a considerable effort, for unless one has worked for that which he has, he neither can appreciate it to the fullest measure, nor can he very often use it well.

Possession of great wealth may be a blessing or a curse, just what we make of it. Wealth, when regarded as a trust involving obligations to society, may be, and usually is, of most benefit to humanity. Wealth which has come easily and which is regarded solely as a means for the gratification of personal desires is a curse both to society and to the individual into whose hands it has fallen.

It has well been said that the unfortunate occurrences which have brought some moving picture stars and those connected therewith under a cloud have been due to the sudden acquisition of money upon the part of those who do not know what to do with it. It can also be said with equal truth that such a state of affairs is by no means confined to moving picture folk. the pranks of the idle rich have long amused sober-minded people, and the antics of some members of the so-called "smart set" have aroused the indignation of right-thinking persons.

There is a difference between the wealth employed in establishing foundations for the study of disease, or for the advancement of education, and wealth employed to seek out a new sensation through "hop parties," "moonshine orgies" or the utter senselessness of "monkey parties."

It is not well for humanity that it shall "get its cocktails too

easily."

Back issues of Taylorology are available on the Web at any of the following:

<http://www.angelfire.com/az/Taylorology/>

<http://www.etext.org/Zines/ASCII/Taylorology/>

<http://www.silent-movies.com/Taylorology/>

Full text searches of back issues can be done at <http://www.etext.org/Zines/>
or at <http://www.silent-movies.com/search.html>. For more information about
Taylor, see

WILLIAM DESMOND TAYLOR: A DOSSIER (Scarecrow Press, 1991)

* T A Y L O R O L O G Y *
* A Continuing Exploration of the Life and Death of William Desmond Taylor *
* *
* Issue 88 -- April 2000 Editor: Bruce Long *
* TAYLOROLOGY may be freely distributed *

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What is TAYLOROLOGY?

TAYLOROLOGY is a newsletter focusing on the life and death of William Desmond Taylor, a top Paramount film director in early Hollywood who was shot to death on February 1, 1922. His unsolved murder was one of Hollywood's major scandals. This newsletter will deal with: (a) The facts of Taylor's life; (b) The facts and rumors of Taylor's murder; (c) The impact of the Taylor murder on Hollywood and the nation; (d) Taylor's associates and the Hollywood silent film industry in which Taylor worked. Primary emphasis will be given toward reprinting, referencing and analyzing source material, and sifting it for accuracy.

The 2-hour episode of A&E's "City Confidential" series, titled "Old Hollywood: Silent Stars, Deadly Secrets," was broadcast on March 19, 2000, and included interviews with Sidney Kirkpatrick, Laurie Jacobson, Betty Lasky, Bruce Long, Charles Higham, Raul Moreno, Marc Wanamaker, Ellen Strain,

Gloria Stuart, Jennifer Niven, Duncan St. James, and Johnny Grant. The program also included several fascinating clips from the 1914 film "The Kiss", with William Desmond Taylor and Margaret Gibson. Although fans of the Taylor case will find portions of the A&E program to be padded and unsatisfactory, those new to the case may find it to be an interesting introduction, and it will hopefully lead to more substantial documentary efforts. In any event, it is a much better and more accurate program than the 1998 "Mysteries & Scandals" episode broadcast on "E!" cable. The A&E video is available for \$19.95 plus shipping at <http://store.aetv.com> (Search for Desmond Taylor.) On a scale of 1 to 10, we rate the A&E documentary with a 5.

The episode of The History Channel's "Perfect Crimes?" series, which included a half-hour segment on "The Case of William Desmond Taylor," was broadcast on March 22, 2000, and included interviews with Laurie Jacobson, Bruce Long, Charles Higham, John Christin, A. C. Lyles, Betty Fussell, and Ray Long. Despite having only about 1/4 the length of the A&E program, this program was much more accurate and interesting, and included never-before-published photos of Sands, a few seconds of Taylor from "The Quakeress," a computerized animation of the bullet path, and Ray Long's discussion of Margaret Gibson. This program was the best documentary on the Taylor case we have yet seen, and on a scale of 1 to 10 we rate it with an 8. Unfortunately, the video is only available in the "Perfect Crimes" 4-tape set, available for \$59.95 plus shipping, also at <http://store.aetv.com> (Search for Desmond Taylor.)

A more detailed criticism of the A&E program appears below. (The History Channel program had only a few errors.)

Some Errors in A&E's "City Confidential"

Although the A&E documentary "Old Hollywood: Silent Stars, Deadly Secrets"

avoided many common errors regarding the Taylor case and Hollywood history, it still had quite a few errors. The following are some of the errors we noticed:

1. It was stated that Cecil B. De Mille and Jesse Lasky brought the movie industry to Hollywood. But when they arrived in 1913 there were already several dozen film companies active in Southern California, and Universal already had a studio in Hollywood itself.

2. In the biographical portion devoted to Taylor's history, no mention was made of his wife and daughter.

3. It was stated that "Captain Alvarez" was the most popular film of 1914. Although it was indeed a popular and profitable film, there were many films in 1914 which were far more popular, including "The Spoilers," "Tess of the Storm Country," "A Fool There Was," "The Squaw Man," etc.

4. It was stated that Mabel Normand was under contract to Paramount. On the contrary, she never, ever worked for Paramount. At the time Paramount was formed, she was working for Sennett, and the only other film companies she worked for after that time were Goldwyn and Roach.

5. It was stated that Taylor was the head of a formal organization dedicated to fighting drug dealing in Hollywood. Although Taylor had met with a Federal drug agent in 1920 and discussed drug use in Hollywood, there are no contemporary reports that Taylor was head of any formal anti-drug organization. Taylor was head of the Motion Picture Director's Association and also head of an anti-censorship organization. But there was no formal anti-drug organization whatsoever in Hollywood at that time. All the rumors that Taylor was fighting drug gangs around the time of his death portrayed Taylor as fighting a lone battle against them--not as the leader of an anti-drug organization.

6. Edward Sands was described as a "fellow soldier," implying that Taylor and Sands were acquaintances from Taylor's army days. But Taylor had been in the British Army, and Sands had been in the U.S. Navy and U.S. Army. Also, Sands was wanted for desertion under his real name of Edward Snyder, so he would have kept hidden his previous military service. He certainly did

not "throw himself on Taylor's mercy" in order to get a job with Taylor.

7. It was stated that Arbuckle's fateful party was celebrating a new \$3,000,000 contract he had signed with Paramount. No, Arbuckle's contract had been signed nine months earlier, in January 1921. This party was just a holiday party for the Labor Day weekend.

8. The report, that Wyoming cowboys had shot up a screen showing an Arbuckle film, was later proven to have been a fake publicity item which never had occurred. See Oderman's book on Arbuckle.

9. It was stated that the L.A.P.D. was involved in Arbuckle's arrest. No, the incident took place in San Francisco, and that is where Arbuckle voluntarily turned himself in.

10. Kirkpatrick stated that on the morning of February 1, 1922, Taylor had gone swimming at the Y.M.C.A. We have seen no contemporary items indicating Taylor ever went to the Y.M.C.A. In Kirkpatrick's book he states that Taylor was swimming at the Los Angeles Athletic Club that morning. That version is far more probable, as Taylor was indeed a member of the L.A. Athletic Club.

11. It was stated that February 1, 1922 was a very typical studio day for Taylor. On the contrary, Taylor only spent a very short time at the studio, since he was between pictures. He spent most of the day attending to personal business elsewhere (banking, shopping, conferring with his tax advisor, etc.).

12. Mabel Normand was described as an "unexpected visitor" to Taylor that evening. On the contrary, Taylor fully expected her, since he had telephoned and asked that she come over to pick up the books he had purchased for her.

13. It is stated that Mabel Normand was searching for letters at Taylor's home when the police arrived on the morning of February 2, 1922. But in reality she did not return to Taylor's home until February 4, two days later. She was not there on the morning of February 2.

14. The "woman's nightgown" was not found in Taylor's closet, it was in a dresser drawer.

15. It is stated that Mary Miles Minter appeared at the coroner's inquest. No, Minter was in seclusion in her home on Hobart, and did not appear at the inquest.

16. It is stated that the studios did little to help Normand in the aftermath of the murder, and that she was considered expendable. On the contrary, the Sennett studio where she worked did all they could to help her, but the amount of negative press and rumors was just overwhelming.

17. It is stated as fact that the nightgown found in Taylor's home was monogrammed with the initials "M.M.M.", and belonged to Minter. The strongest evidence is that the nightgown contained no initials and did not belong to her.

18. It is stated that Sands was found dead of "natural causes" in Connecticut. The person in Connecticut, whom many people believe was not Sands, died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, not "natural causes."

19. It is stated that Shelby never was an official suspect. On the contrary, L.A.P.D. detective Jesse Winn later testified that Shelby had been considered a suspect right from the start, and the 1926 and 1937 investigations centered on Shelby as the prime suspect.

20. It is stated that the newspapers of that time would not mention rumors of homosexuality, but there were indeed such rumors mentioned at the time regarding the Taylor case.

21. It is stated that the Taylor murder also killed the film careers of Mabel Normand and Mary Miles Minter. The murder certainly had a negative impact on both careers, but it didn't kill either career. Mabel continued making films for nearly another five years. Mary Miles Minter made four more films for Paramount, which finished her 3-year contract. She was not rehired by Paramount, but she did receive offers from other film producers, which she declined.

21. It is stated that the Taylor murder led to the Hays Code. But Hays had been hired before Taylor was killed, and the formal Hays Code did not take effect until the 1930's. Any effect which the Taylor murder had on the Hays code was minimal.

22. John Gilbert did not have the squeaky voice of a schoolgirl.

Herb Howe's Last Article about Mabel Normand

No contemporary fan magazine writer was more sympathetic to Mabel Normand than Herbert Howe. The first article he wrote about her was "The Diaries of Mabel Normand," published in 1921 and reprinted in MABEL NORMAND: A SOURCE BOOK TO HER LIFE AND FILMS, by William Thomas Sherman. Several of Howe's brief contemporary items on Mabel were reprinted in TAYLOROLOGY #10. The following article is evidently the last article Howe wrote about Mabel, and was published in 1931.

* * * * *

April 1931
Herbert Howe
NEW MOVIE MAGAZINE

Hollywood's Hall of Fame: Mabel Normand

...Probably the writer's definition of the greatest personality would be the one who supplies the best copy, the most interesting from a story angle, be he saint or devil, mental giant or movie magazine writer.

That which issues from the mouth of man is but a fraction of his personal expression. A person may be fascinating and yet give a punk interview. "Interview" is a misnomer, anyhow. Usually it is just a bleating.

...Although in the past I have used the word "soul" many times like a sloven writer, I confess I do not know what it is. I seem to have a clearer

idea of "heart." Perhaps the two are synonymous. Certainly greatness of heart seems to me to be the greatest ingredient for lasting charm. That is why Mabel Normand is first with me.

I had heard a lot about Mabel before meeting her. Everyone always heard a lot about Mabel. I did not think I would care much for her. A practical joker, according to stories, she liked to shock in burlesque fashion. Typically Irish, I was told. Impulsive, wild-tongued. In fact, from the hearsay picture, I gathered that Mabel was a hoyden, and from a hoyden I will run as from battle.

One afternoon I went with Adela Rogers St. Johns to Mahlon Hamilton's for cocktails before attending the premiere of "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse." That was years before Hollywood was scandalously headlined. There were a number of people in the drawing-room, among them several stars but no one particularly exciting. Suddenly I had the feeling that an arc lamp was flooding the room. I turned toward the door and saw a girl dressed in black, a large black hat shadowing her face, a string of tiny pearls around her throat. In her arm she carried several books which she evidently was returning. She came into the room with the shy step of a country cousin, and I noted she was pigeon-toed. Several people spoke to her but I did not get her name and no one took the trouble to introduce me. They didn't need to; I naturally gravitated. Almost at once I was immersed in the eloquence of dark eyes. I do not know whether I thought her beautiful. I was too far sunk for trivial observations.

I must have had a gaspy look, for she gave me a sort of resuscitating smile and asked me if I had read the books which she placed on a table, and did I like Stephen Leacock.

I said I was sure I would--if given a chance.

"Let me send you this one," she said. "And there is another I think you will like. Will you give me your name and address?" I gave.

It would be impossible for me to say how long we talked. I think Einstein's theory of relativity might apply, but as to that I am not clear. Anyhow I had the feeling of having known her much longer than time. She left

as shyly as she had come, giving me an amused smile and offering her hand. (Curious how little details bob up in memory: I recall her telling me later that people were always giving her gloves which she detested and never wore.)

As soon as she had gone I galloped to Adela: "Who is she?--I'm crazy--"

"Don't be so original," booed the unpitying Adela. "Everyone is crazy about her who ever knew her. Don't tell me you haven't recognized her! She is Mabel Normand."

Well, as Texas Guinan once exclaimed when similarly shocked, "I didn't know whether to commit suicide or sing 'Baby Shoes.'"

Incredible as it may seem, I was not at that time a fan for Mabel's pictures. And I am one of the rare souls who never recognizes a star off the screen.

I went on to the premiere of "The Four Horsemen" but I couldn't seem to keep my mind on the picture. It seemed disjointed. I was the only reviewer who failed to hail Rex Ingram a genius, and so Rex engaged me to do his publicity and we became very good friends.

Thus I came under Mabel Normand's fatal spell which started operating immediately to my benefit.

A few days later the Leacock books arrived with several stories marked.

M. Jomier, the favorite French instructor of Hollywood, was in my apartment that afternoon. We had started to talk French but soon lapsed into an English discussion of Mabel. I found he was among those obsessed like myself. We were talking of Mabel when the telephone rang.

"Do you know who this is?" asked the voice.

"Yes," I said.

"Why, you big liar!"

"Thank you for the books," I said.

"How did you know my voice?--Listen will you do something for me?"

"Everything."

"Not that. I don't know you well enough. But will you do my publicity? They are raising the devil with me down here at the studio."

"Everything but that," I laughed. "I know you too well for that--"

I meant that I knew her reputation for loathing publicity. She ran from it like a frightened child from a willow switch. It was a bitter fate that crushed her with headlines later. When now I think of her terrific aversion I wonder if it was not a premonition. She would elude interviewers with the agility of a quarried rabbit. When caught by one she would invariably beguile him into babbling of himself, and he would leave with only a rapturous impression. This was not design on her part. She had a voracious interest in people. She would rather hear a life story than tell one. Naturally sympathetic, her instinct was for liking everyone. I recall one interviewer calling in the throes of a flu-cold. Mabel made him take a hot foot-bath, gave him a toddy, bundled him up in one of her fur coats and sent him home in the care of her chauffeur.

My friendship with Mabel was extraordinary so far as I am concerned, but there are countless others who can testify as I do. We know she had friends everywhere, but we did not realize how many until she died. Messages came from all parts of the world. A wealthy woman in New York, prominent in society here and abroad, wrote that she had arranged for a mass to be said every month, perpetually, for the eternal rest of Mabel. I visited an Italian orphanage where the children offer their daily prayers for her. Next to me at her funeral a boy in threadbare clothes sobbed convulsively throughout the service. No one seemed to know who he was. No one, for that matter, knows how many partook of "the great heart of Mabel." I gained a faint idea when I met her Father Confessor. I quote him when I say, "The great heart of Mabel."

Mabel was endowed with intuition amounting to clairvoyance. Through her own suffering sensitiveness she understood people.

On my return from a European trip six or seven years ago, she said, "I bet you miss the good wines over there."

I confessed I did.

"Listen, my dear," she said. "You must drink none of this stuff over here. God knows I am not a preacher or prohibitionist. My friends are welcome to drink as they choose. But I have taken a pledge."

"Appreciating Mabel's humor, I laughed.

"Are you a Catholic?" she asked suddenly.

"No," I said, "but I went to school with Catholic boys."

"I am a Catholic," laughed Mabel, "but don't hold that against the church. There are good and bad in all religions. God love them all! I am not bigoted. But there is one priest who is a miracle-worker. He saved my life, God love him. I wish you would let me introduce you to Father Chiappa, a very old Italian priest. You like Italians, don't you? Well, Father Chiappa is so saintly that when you meet him you will feel you are entering heaven. Lord knows whether you will ever feel that way hereafter, so you'd better meet him."

"I would like to."

"Really?" She seemed astonished.

"Really."

"He won't lecture you or ask you to take the pledge. He will just talk to you and make you love him. You can tell him all your sins and he will never spill the beans."

"How old is he?"

"Seventy-two."

"He wouldn't have time to hear them all."

Mabel laughed: "Will you go tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow."

"I don't believe you a bit. I shall call you."

The next day we went to Loyola to see Father Chiappa. Mabel entered first, "to prepare him," she said, "as a sudden shock might kill him."

She came out throwing kisses at the old priest who protested with upraised hands, "Mabel! Mabel!"

I entered the little office and talked with Father Chiappa, a man of Christ-like gentleness over whom the earth no longer had power. When he died a few months before Mabel, I felt I had lost an unfailing friend. Such is the instant power of fine personality.

Mabel was waiting for me in her car when I came out. She could scarcely

restrain her excitement and the devil was in her eyes.

"Did you like him?" she demanded.

"Of course I liked him."

"What did he say? Did he scold you? I hope he did. He didn't ask for money, now did he?"

"Certainly not."

"But you gave him some. I can tell. Now didn't you?"

"A little for your Italian orphanage."

"Why, I'll never speak to you again. How much did you give him?"

I told her.

"Well, of all the--! I shall never forgive you as long as I live. You can't afford it. I am surprised Father Chaippa would take it."

"He didn't. I left it on the prie-dieu. I happened to pry some of your secrets out of him. I learned you had built a wing on that orphans' home."

"It isn't true," said Mabel. "But tell me, what happened?"

"I took the pledge for three months."

"You are not telling the truth! What did you do?"

"I knelt down--"

"Let me see your knees!" Mabel bent over and regarded the knees of my trousers on which there were circles of dust. "Well, of all--! Wait until Mamie hears this!"

Mabel bounced up and down on the seat, rapped on the window for the chauffeur to drive faster and squealed with unseemly glee.

Mamie was Mabel's old white-haired Irish maid, a devout Catholic, whose devotion to Mabel was only matched by Mabel's love for her over a period of many years.

"Mamie! Mamie!" screamed Mabel, throwing her arms around her maid when we had entered the house. "Mamie, Herb has been to Father Chaippa and taken the pledge. Can you beat that? Mamie, have you a drink to give him? He deserves one."

"Shame on you, Mabel," said Mamie. "An' God bless you Mishter Howe."

"Well, anyhow, I shall buy you a lunch at my Italian friend's across the

street," said Mabel.

We crossed the street to a restaurant where Mabel was received by the proprietor with genuflections such as are given the Madonna.

"This Italian is a wonderful fellow," said Mabel in an awed whisper. "I gave him five hundred dollars when he was going broke and, do you know, he paid me back!"

I had never seen Mabel in all her variety as she was during that lunch of five hours. She told me most of her life story. Mabel was the perfect clown. She could have you in tears of one sort or another all the time. I wonder what became of all those diaries into which Mabel scribbled her poems of joy and sorrow. I read some of them. They had the beauty of things not done for recognition. She could only show me a few. I think she must have destroyed them. The beauty of her inner self abashed her, she was so conscious of her failings. And yet I know no one of such beautiful accomplishments.

I could fill the whole booksholf with anecdotes of Mabel. I do not want to speak of the world's misjudgment of her. It was the pain that killed her. Father Chaippa could have written her true story. He belonged to the Society of Jesus.

May Rupp's Accusation

The flare-up of the Taylor murder which resulted in the largest number of "arrests" resulted from the statements made by May Rupp, as indicated by the following clippings.

* * * * *

March 1, 1922

Protect Woman in Death Case

Uniformed officers were detailed to guard the home of Mrs. John Rupp, 1836 1/2 West Washington Street, last night when she appealed for protection from members of a gang whom she accused yesterday of complicity in the slaying of William Desmond Taylor, film director.

Following her recital of an amazing story concerning her asserted knowledge of the murder, in which she named six men now in jail, she stated that other members of the gang as yet uncaught would attempt to kill her.

While the six arrested at her home early yesterday morning by Wilshire police were being held incommunicado at Central Police Station, Mrs. Rupp made a detailed statement of her information in the District Attorney's office to Detective Sergeants Edward King and Wynn. The statement was taken by a shorthand reporter.

After checking certain phases of her story the officers stated that "It looked good and provided perhaps the most important lead uncovered to date."

The suspects, who are being held for the time being on suspicion of robbery, are asserted by her to have bootlegged liquor to Mr. Taylor, that two in particular informed her on the day before the murder that they had quarreled with the director over his refusal to pay them for a delivery, and in her presence threatened to kill him. She named one of the men as the probable slayer...

The six men held in jail will be questioned singly today. At a late hour last night none of the men had been grilled by police. One outstanding detail of the charges made by Mrs. Rupp against them is that she confided to another woman on February 2 that she believed she knew who had killed Mr. Taylor. This woman yesterday confirmed the report that Mrs. Rupp had made this remark.

The six men held incommunicado at Central station are William East, 36 years old; Walter Kirby, 23, John Herkey, 25; Ray Lynch, 26; George Calvert, 25, and Harry Amorheim, 27. They were arrested at Mrs. Rupp's home on West Washington Street, where, she stated, she served as their housekeeper.

Mrs. Rupp's story, if it is authentic, has provided the investigators for the first time with a motive for the slaying of William Desmond Taylor, a crime of a most mysterious character which has aroused interest in two continents.

Her story is that of "a woman scorned," relating that one of the men now held prisoner and with whom she had been on very friendly terms, had thrown her aside for another woman. The men, she said, have been in hiding since the day Mr. Taylor's body was discovered.

The men, she asserted, had sold several consignments of liquor to Mr. Taylor, which had been represented to him as bonded liquor. The last consignment proved to be only bootleg liquor which Mr. Taylor is said to have refused to accept, this act of his having aroused the ire of illicit dealers.

Mrs. Rupp declared she became cognizant of their activities and possible knowledge of the murder when one night two of the men returned to her home, where they were residing also, and entered into an altercation, during which she said she heard of a vengeance plot to kill somebody.

Later, she added, these two men declared the person previously mentioned had double-crossed them, following which statement, she continued, the plan to kill him was told to her.

Mrs. Rupp said she accused them of killing Mr. Taylor, following the murder, and was told:

"My -----, don't mention that."

"The Taylor murder mystery is solved if Mrs. Rupp is telling the truth," Detective Sergeant Herman Cline, commander of the newly created police homicide squad, declared last night...

* * * * *

March 1, 1922

SACRAMENTO BEE

Los Angeles--...Mrs. Rupp, who is ill and in bed, is guarded by the police at her home. The detectives said they had previous acquaintance with

her, Sergeant Baldridge declaring she was "an eccentric" and had once attempted suicide after a quarrel with a sweetheart.

The officers said that in investigating her story they were taking into account their previous knowledge of her as well as the possibility she might be actuated by a motive of jealousy.

A short time before Taylor was slain, according to the police re-statement of Mrs. Rupp's story, two of the six men returned to her home, and told her:

"He double-crossed us; wouldn't pay for the booze we brought him. We'll get the ----- . We're going to kill him."

The name of the director was not spoken, however, it was stated.

Mrs. Rupp said she dismissed the threat from her mind until the day after the murder. Then, she said, while she and the two men were at dinner, she suddenly cried out to one of them:

"You are the man who killed Taylor!"

"He turned perfectly white and sagged in his chair," Mrs. Rupp was quoted. "Then he said: 'Good God! Don't say that again! Don't ever mention that again!'"

"I never did," Mrs. Rupp was said to have continued, "but during the next two weeks, one man would frequently come running into the house and hide in his room. Once he said to me: 'The bulls are after me! Help me hide!'"

Mrs. Rupp was said to have given the police the name of an alleged bootlegger from whom the six men were reported to have obtained the liquor were charged with having sold. The officers were said to be searching for this man.

"The morning after the murder," Mrs. Rupp was quoted, "I said to my landlady, 'I know who killed Taylor.'"

Mrs. Edith Spitzer, 1819 South Normandie Avenue, who owns the house where Mrs. Rupp lived, was said by the police to have confirmed this statement. The officers declared this corroboration proved Mrs. Rupp had not "manufactured" her story recently...

* * * * *

March 1, 1922

HARTFORD COURANT

Los Angeles--...Two days before the shooting of Taylor, the police declare she informed them, Kirby and Calvert uttered threats against the film director for "injuring their business." The two, she said, were extremely nervous on the night of February 1, when Taylor was killed, and were away from the place during the early evening. Both stayed up all night.

* * * * *

March 2, 1922

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

Los Angeles--...A new arrest in the William D. Taylor murder investigation is imminent as the result of information which confirms certain phases relating to the arrest of six men Tuesday morning.

The new suspect is said to be a motion picture actor of some standing and to have been the confidante of several clever criminals, two of whom were arrested several months ago by Federal agents.

The six men held in the city jail on suspicion of robbery, who are asserted by Mrs. John Rupp to be members of a bootlegging gang which quarreled with the film director, were grilled by detectives today.

George Calvert, also known as Rodney Calvert, alleged to be one of a band of bootleggers that supplied Roscoe Arbuckle with liquor, was named by Mrs. Rupp as the man she says threatened in her presence to kill Taylor.

The result of the questioning of the six men arrested in Mrs. Rupp's apartment was not divulged, but it was rumored that important disclosures were made and that one of the men was on the verge of "breaking."

The new arrest predicted concerns an individual mentioned by Mrs. Rupp in her statement as an associate of the men in custody. She did not state his connection with the case clearly, but confidential information seems to

indicate that he is in possession of the facts of the slaying...

The statement made under oath today by Mrs. Rupp was 10,000 words in length and mentioned the names of several prominent motion picture actors, some whose names have been brought out in the investigation of Taylor's murder.

Her statement also revealed that Mrs. Rupp had attempted suicide following a brutal beating which she declared was given her by certain members of the gang. Throughout her interview with the detectives, all of which was recorded by a shorthand reporter, she referred to the "poison" which she had taken, of the remarks made by some of the men now under arrest, whom she said had exclaimed, "Let her die," when they learned of her condition, and of the threats of death of prevent her from "squealing."

In declaring Calvert was the man who had threatened to take Taylor's life, the woman said he was enraged and alarmed by the film director's threat to break up his illicit liquor traffic because Calvert had sent him synthetic whisky represented to be bonded liquor.

Since the men were arrested, none but officials have access to them. Mrs. Rupp's house at 1836 1/2 West Washington Street has been under police guard. Mrs. Rupp is ill. She says the men tried to asphyxiate her to keep her from telling her story to the authorities.

More than twenty-four hours have elapsed since Mrs. Rupp first told her story, and although all the resources of the police and Sheriff's office have been used to test it, the story stands intact in every material detail.

Mrs. Rupp's statement is the first of the "confessions" to really impress the investigators. She admits informing the police because she wants revenge on one of the men, a sweetheart, she says "threw her down," but to prove she did not make up the story on the spur of the moment, has sent the detectives to a woman who substantiated her statement that Mrs. Rupp told her the day after the murder, that she knew who killed Taylor.

According to Mrs. Rupp's statement, the six men, including two who came from Chicago some time ago, operated a bootlegging and narcotic peddling trade among the Hollywood motion picture folk. Arbuckle was one of their customers,

Mrs. Rupp said. Taylor had bought liquor from the men, but their usual source of supply being shut off, they sent him moonshine and said it was the usual bonded goods. The woman says Calvert is wanted in Chicago for "a terrible crime."

Taylor detected the fraud immediately and not only refused to pay Calvert, but threatened to break up his trade, Mrs. Rupp declared. It was this threat that caused Calvert to say he would kill Taylor.

She says on the night of the murder Calvert and another of the men were away from the house in the evening and after returning stayed up all night. She accused Calvert of the murder, she said, and he became pale and told her "never to mention that again."

The companions of Calvert are booked as William East, laborer; Walter Kirby, studio property man; John Herkey, sheet metal worker, and Harry Amorheim (probably Arnheim), chauffeur. Calvert said he was a gas fitter.

March 2, 1922
ARIZONA REPUBLICAN

Los Angeles--...Mrs. Rupp, who is said to be known also as Mrs. May Lynch...stated that after the murder, when she accused one of the men of it, he beat her severely and warned her not to mention the matter again.

It was the treatment she received from the men that finally resulted in her giving information against them to the police...

March 2, 1922
NEW YORK NEWS

Los Angeles--...Mrs. Rupp is also known as May Lynch, and she has been in trouble with the police on more than one occasion because of her association with drug peddlers. She recently quarreled with Harry Lynch, one of the men

under arrest, and her story directly implicates him in the Taylor mystery. He has denied to the police knowing anything of the murder, though he admits knowing Taylor, and he has offered an alibi which the police are now examining closely.

The Rupp woman's story is that Taylor became inflamed with anger over the poor quality of the liquor which the bootleggers had supplied him with a few days before he was killed. He called one of the gang on the telephone, she says, and denounced him and the rest of the crew, in unmeasured terms, swearing he would put an end to their traffic in drugs, of which he was aware, because they had double-crossed him on his liquor supply.

Two film beauties, one at least closely identified with Taylor, were customers of the dope peddlers, Mrs. Rupp says, and Taylor knew this. He had tried in vain to break this woman of the habit and had often vowed to take drastic measures to stop the traffic. But his words only threatened to crystalize into action when he was convinced he himself was the victim of the gang's duplicity in their bootlegging operations.

Knowing him to be a man of his word and with powerful influences, the gang, Mrs. Rupp says, held a conference in her house after he had denounced them over the telephone. She overheard some of the conversation which ensued, she says. Two of them, whom she names, declared that something must be done to stop Taylor from taking action.

One of the gang proposed taking back the shipment of hootch and substituting good liquor, but the leader of the gang, Mrs. Rupp says, was opposed to this as too expensive a way of settling the trouble....

Mrs. Rupp told the police that the same crew of bootleggers supplied Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle with liquors, which were such a feature of his Hollywood entertainments and performed similar services for other screen favorites of both sexes. Any drug or narcotic desired was supplied by them at fancy prices, she says...

* * * * *

March 2, 1922

SEATTLE STAR

Los Angeles--Ramifications of the bootlegging industry extending into the realm of the motion picture profession were uncovered today with the institution of a search by detectives for a well known screen actor named by Mrs. John Rupp in connection with the murder of William D. Taylor

...The bootlegging of liquor and drugs was not the only business conducted by the gang now held incommunicado at the central station, the informant intimated.

"Any job wanted could be arranged through this actor," was the way Mrs. Rupp expressed it.

Detective Sergeant Cline said today that he believed this actor, knowing all the secrets of the underworld gangsters, and their contact with the film world, would be able to give the police the facts of the "movie murder."

Detectives were trying to locate him. It was believed he would be found before night.

* * * * *

March 2, 1922

ST. LOUIS GLOBE-DEMOCRAT

Los Angeles--...The organization of bootleggers is the same that supplied Fatty Arbuckle with liquor, according to Mrs. Rupp. She also named two of the leading motion picture actresses on the west coast, as regular customers of the bootleggers.

Mrs. Rupp declared that the agents made regular trips to several studios which she named. Deliveries were made one day and collections another, according to her statement.

She said once in their presence:

"I know who killed Taylor. It was -----," naming one of the men.

Her half-jesting remark brought a storm of oaths and commands for her to keep quiet from all of the men, she says.

Later she heard the two she suspected discussing her. They were saying that they had better get her out of the way before she told something.

Mrs. Rupp, who is also known as May Lynch, quarreled with Harry Lynch, one of the men taken in the raid, and charged with robbery.

Despondent, she drank poison and was in a serious condition at her home when the two men she suspects of the Taylor murder came in. She declares in her statement that the men disconnected a rubber hose that fed a gas heater, turned on the gas and held the hose against her face, hoping to asphyxiate her. Before the succeeded, a police ambulance arrived and she was taken to the Receiving Hospital, where police surgeons saved her life.

Mrs. Rupp also stated the suspects, alarmed at what they feared she would tell, planned to get out of Los Angeles on a freight train. The men she had been housing tried to take her victrola and sell it to give them a stake on which to leave the city.

* * * * *

March 2, 1922

CHICAGO HERALD-EXAMINER

Los Angeles--...Back of the slaying of William Desmond Taylor was more than a mere row over bootleg whisky, according to an amplified story told detectives today by Mrs. John Rupp, otherwise known as Mrs. Lynch.

Mr. Taylor had been angered, she said, by receiving poor quality liquor from his bootleggers, who she points out as his murderers, and the fact that a woman friend, dear to his heart, had become seriously ill as a result of drinking some of the stuff.

Mrs. Rupp today told the police the tongue-lashing Mr. Taylor had given the bootleggers had been primarily based upon the illness of this woman--an actress, though not a star of the first magnitude. Her name has been mentioned on a number of occasions since the director's death, in connection with the case, and for a considerable time Mr. Taylor was known to have been in love with her.

It seems that but a short time before his death, if Mrs. Rupp's story is to be credited, this actress and a friend were at Mr. Taylor's home and while there drank considerable portions of the stock said to have been obtained from two of the men now in jail.

The next day both were very ill from drinking this liquor and Mr. Taylor, calling the bootleggers on the telephone, ordered them to come to his house. When they arrived he is said not only to have refused to pay for the stock but to have charged them with responsibility for his friends' illness.

The manner in which Mrs. Rupp told this to the police convinces the officers that a part of her story, at least, is true. She said she heard the men discussing this phase of the case and had overheard the name of the woman. It was a name unfamiliar to her and she recalled it only when the officers had repeated to her the names of all the stars and near-stars who have been mentioned in connection with the murder.

Her story took such proportions today that the district attorney, who for several days has taken little part in the investigation, indicated a desire to question her personally and put her through such an examination as to determine at once the truth or falsity of her statements...

It was Lynch who indirectly caused the woman to "tip off" the police, for after a row with her several days ago, she says he beat her. In retaliation she told the police all she knew, she said.

* * * * *

March 2, 1922

MINNEAPOLIS JOURNAL

Six Called Innocent of Taylor Murder

Los Angeles--...The six men arrested on information furnished by Mrs. John Rupp, their housekeeper, had no connection with the murder of William D. Taylor, motion picture director, it was announced today by Detective Sergeant Herman Cline, in charge of the investigation. He said examination of Mrs.

Rupp and investigation convinced the detectives that there was no foundation to her statements that they had threatened the life of Taylor...

* * * * *

March 2, 1922
SHREVEPORT TIMES

Los Angeles--..The story of Mrs. John Rupp, which led to the arrest of seven men, was discarded by the police as "imaginative and based on a desire for revenge."
The men will be held, however, while the police try to connect them with several small robberies...

Taylor Fighting Censorship

In 1921 there were renewed efforts to impose national censorship of motion pictures, and also efforts to install a municipal censor in Los Angeles. These efforts ultimately failed, due in part to the appointment of Will Hays as head of the film industry. William Desmond Taylor was one of the leaders of the anti-censorship forces, and the following item was given wide distribution when Los Angeles was considering municipal censorship during September 1921. [Thanks to Charles Higham for providing a copy of this document.]

* * * * *

The Nonsense of Censorship
by William D. Taylor
President-director of the Motion Picture Directors' Association,

Los Angeles Lodge

Censorship of motion pictures is a menace to the very principles of the Constitution of these United States of America.

How strong a grasp it has obtained over the constitutional rights of America may be seen in the fact that nearly one-third of the total population of this country may now see only such motion pictures as come commission has decided they may see.

True there are but six states where pre-censorship of ideas has been made legal. These are Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania. But the population of these six states totals thirty-two million persons.

Nor are actual residents of these states the only ones imposed upon; in many cases film exchanges located in censorship territory furnish motion pictures to a large outlying district. It is obviously difficult to re-insert scenes that once have been deleted.

In addition to the states mentioned a number of cities have imposed on their people a local motion picture censorship. Up to now, loyal Americans who believe in upholding the fundamental principles on which this free nation was founded have been to a great extent successful in stamping out threatened censorship in its incipency.

Among states that repudiated film censorship measures during 1921 legislative sessions are California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont and Washington. Many municipalities likewise turned down censorship propositions.

Now this city of Los Angeles, world's centre for motion pictures, is threatened by a group of well meaning but poorly informed reformers with a situation that would almost instantaneously cause every state and every city that has frowned on censorship to reconsider.

They want to censor films in Los Angeles. They want to look at that picture before it has been shown on any public screen and tell the producer

of that picture what he must or must not show.

The ominous meaning of the censor in American life has seeped its way into the consciousness of some of them. This group wants the word "censor" dropped.

"Call it motion picture commission" they say.

A censor by any other name is just as sour.

There is no place for a censor of motion picture publication in a country whose constitution guarantees its citizens free publication by speech, by picture and by the press.

Censorship by any name is un-American.

Not only un-American--unnecessary.

There are laws on the statute books of every state, every city, that amply protect against the salacious, the immoral or the demoralizing.

Just as it is the duty of every citizen to report to the police authorities any violations of the criminal code that come to his notice, so is it his duty to report to the police authorities any violations of the laws of morality or of social welfare he may see on the screen of the motion picture theatre. If a scene he objects to cannot be suppressed by the police power it could not legally be suppressed by censor power. His resource in such a case is to boycott such a theatre and to notify the theatre manager of his action and the reason for it.

The arguments against censorship are too well known to dwell on at any length. Every school child who knows the true history of the founding of the United States of America can argue against censorship as forcefully as the most polished orator or accomplished advocate.

Will Los Angeles stand for a censorship within its gates?

Tell the City Council what YOU think about it.

Flashes of Neva Gerber

Because of the central role Neva Gerber played in the life of William Desmond Taylor from 1914-1919, we have long hoped to devote an entire issue of TAYLOROLOGY to her. Unfortunately we have found contemporary items on her to be very elusive and fragmentary, and we have never found any substantial interviews with her in any of the silent film fan magazines. A few interviews were published in the aftermath of the Taylor murder, and those interviews were reprinted in TAYLOROLOGY 60, 62 and 86. A recent career article was published in the February 1999 issue of CLASSIC IMAGES and is available online at <http://www.classicimages.com/1999/february99/gerber.html> The following are a few contemporary fragments pertaining to Neva Gerber which have crossed our path.

* * * * *

November 9, 1912

MOTOGRAPHY

Neva Gerber is the substitute for Miss Christie in George Melford's company of Kalem players at Glendale, Cal. Miss Christie's going to New York meant Miss Gerber's first appearance in pictures in which she is playing leads.

* * * * *

May 16, 1914

MOTOGRAPHY

Edwin August is gradually getting a very strong company together for his Feature Films and his first independent feature, the adaptation of a famous novel, is well on the way. J. Farrell MacDonald, the producer of Samson and other successes is the director and Neva Delorez, a young, beautiful and experienced actress, is acting opposite August. With Hal August, Eugene Ormonde and Edith Bostwick, Jack Weatherbee and Layola O'Connor in the cast

and with Frank Ormston as technical director and Mary O'Connor looking after the scenarios, Mr. August has a company and staff of extraordinary strength.

* * * * *

June 6, 1914
NEW YORK CLIPPER

Edwin August has completed his first feature picture for the Balboa company, and is going to produce a comedy drama with a new idea running through it. He has moved to Long Beach and occupies a delightful apartment there. He has lots of nice things to say regarding both his juvenile, Hal August, and his leading lady, Neva Delorez.

* * * * *

July 25, 1914
MOVIE PICTORIAL

Whilst waiting in an automobile downtown recently, Neva Gerber of William D. Taylor's Balboa company, was reproved by a social worker for having so much paint on her face. When the other actors arrived the lady fled without apologies.

* * * * *

March 20, 1915
MOVING PICTURE WORLD

[This item is very fanciful.] Neva Gerber, playing opposite to Carlyle Blackwell in "The High Hand," the next Favorite Players production, is the daughter of the late S. Nelson Gerber, for years the most prominent criminal lawyer in Chicago. Miss Gerber is a daughter of the Sunny South, and granddaughter of the late William Younge, Governor of Kentucky, and a direct descendent of John Wentworth, first Governor of New Hampshire, appointed by

the English crown. She is closely related to General Benjamin F. Butler.

Driving high-powered autos and aeroplanes is Miss Gerber's hobby. She has to her credit having driven the ninety-horsepower Mercedes car which the great racer, De Palma, drove, and in which he has braved death several times. She is but a slip of a girl, but is one of the most daring automobile drivers, and is well known among the auto jockeys of California.

Miss Gerber is a graduate of the Convent of the Immaculate Heart, and a finished pianist. She is very fond of her very famous thoroughbred bull "Brutus," who is her constant companion.

Neva Gerber played opposite to Carlyle Blackwell in the Kalem Co., opposite to Hal August in the Edwin August Feature Films and was leading woman for William D. Taylor's Balboa Company. George Melford, now directing for the Lasky Company, is responsible for Miss Gerber's being in motion pictures, and he is justly proud of his find. She played leads in "Criminal Code" and "An Eye for an Eye" under the direction of William D. Taylor with the Balboa and "The Detective's Sister" with Carlyle Blackwell in the Kalem Company; also "The Great Secret" and "The Awakening" in the Edwin August Feature Films.

Coincidentally Miss Gerber finds herself again associated with William D. Taylor as her director and Carlyle Blackwell as her "hero."

* * * * *

July 5, 1915

NEW YORK CLIPPER

Neva Gerber, who plays the leading role in "The Redemption of the Jasons," a new American "Beauty" release, is the swiftest runner in the American studios at Santa Barbara. Miss Gerber, who always has been an athlete, recently won ten pounds of candy from Webster Campbell, who plays opposite her. She wagered she could defeat Campbell in a one hundred yards dash. She did.

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August 21, 1915

NEW YORK CLIPPER

Neva Gerber, of the Beauty Brand, visited Los Angeles for the first time since she joined the Flying A company, some months back. Neva states that she likes Santa Barbara immensely and that she and her mother have a small bungalow and lots of callers. Neva has advanced in her work considerably of late, and is quite popular.

* * * * *

November 13, 1915

PHOTO-PLAY REVIEW

Neva Gerber acknowledges that she possesses a peculiar name but it is her very own. She changed it once when acting opposite Edwin August who did not think it sounded romantic enough, so for a time she was billed as Neva Dolorez but she turned back to "Gerber" when she left August to play with Carlyle Blackwell.

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April 8, 1916

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Neva Gerber has been offered and has accepted an engagement with the B. & L. Company at San Mateo, and leaves Los Angeles for the north at the end of the week. Neva has been considering several offers, but this one attracts her, as she likes the idea of a change of location and wants to see more of San Francisco. Neva Gerber and Sadie Lindblom are opposites and they should get along famously together.

* * * * *

April 22, 1916

PHOTOPLAYERS WEEKLY

Lena Baskette, the nine-year-old Universal dancer who unaccompanied went to visit her father at San Mateo last week, was witness and aid to the rescue of Neva Gerber and Earle Emlay from death by drowning in the Feather River near Beldon. The man who made the rescue was Lena's father, Frank E. Baskette, clubman and wealthy druggist of San Mateo. Mr. Baskette and his little daughter accompanied the B. & L. Film Company, who went to Beldon for the taking of water scenes. Mr. Baskette was the first to notice that the wire fastening the boat containing the actor and the actress had broken. The occupants were hurled into the stream and Frank Smith, a guide, twice attempted to reach them, but was hurled against a boulder and D. H. Roberts, Western Passenger Agent, went to his assistance.

Mr. Baskette jumped into the river, but the man and woman had disappeared for the second time before he came within reach of them. They were unconscious when the San Mateo clubman succeeded in dragging them to a rock which stood above the water. Lena remained calm during the struggle for life which she saw before her, and directed her father toward the spot where the drowning people had last appeared. She offered her car to whoever might need it and thankfully clung to her father.

Miss Gerber and Mr. Emlay were rushed to a hospital, and the former was found to be in a serious condition from breakdown and a skull adhesion.

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September 22, 1917

MOVING PICTURE WORLD

Neva Gerber was operated upon for appendicitis at the Clara Barton Hospital, Los Angeles, on August 23. The operation was a success, but it will be at least a month before Miss Gerber will be in satisfactory condition for the resumption of her work and then only to play in scenes requiring but

little effort on her part.

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October 6, 1917

MOVING PICTURE WORLD

Neva Gerber returned to her home in Hollywood last Monday from the hospital, where an operation for appendicitis had been performed upon this Universal star two weeks previously. Miss Gerber is gaining strength rapidly and her physician says she will be able to resume her work at Universal City in about three weeks. She has the leading feminine role in the serial, "The Phantom Ship," which is being produced under the direction of Francis Ford.

More Gossip from Capt. Billy's Whiz Bang

In TAYLOROLOGY 74 we reprinted some gossip from the humor magazine CAPT. BILLY'S WHIZ BANG. Some TAYLOROLOGY readers have requested more of the same, so here is the first gossip column contained in that publication.

* * * * *

August 1920

CAPT. BILLY'S WHIZ BANG

Hollywood Heart-Breakers

The following article is the first of a series that will depict the more intimate life of the movie actors and actresses who make their headquarters in the vicinity of Los Angeles. This series is in no sense to be considered

"press agent dope." THE WHIZ BANG, in this series, proposes to tell its readers of the little romances of their favorite screen star--of lives strewn with mobilized immoderation, fickle faithlessness and dark desolation. As an actress once told me: "Our step is pep; our creed is speed."

by Marion

Hollywood, beautiful little suburb of Los Angeles and famous as America's leading movie hot-house, is running pretty nowadays with its many wondrous autos and, Oh! those numerous and naughty little, palpitating bungalow intrigues.

The Mary Pickford-Doug Fairbanks romance, is almost old stuff with Mary and Doug on a bit of a honeymoon in New York and London, while forty eleven representatives of the daily papers accompanied them as far as Arizona to watch the Moki Indians get their first glimpse of the screen.

One of the merriest rumors just now extant regards another member of the Pickford family, to-wit, Lottie. Lottie is a live wire in the parlance of the country clubs and cafes. In southern California, until the "prohis" bore down, the word "country club" meant one of the nightly places of revelry, stretched all the way from Vernon to the beach. These places are somewhat on the blink now, but it has been known that a stray "shot in the arm" has been seen to take effect. In fact a wagon load recently was taken to the police station from Vernon.

But getting back to Lottie. For a considerable number of moons the night black eyes of Mary's sister beamed favorably upon a certain handsome Apollo of the screens. It wasn't a case of, wherever Mary went the boy was sure to go. It was a case of, wherever Lottie went she took the boy along. At ball games, country clubs, bungalow dances, midnight revelries, Lottie and her lad were together. Then came dame rumor, and she is a busy dame in these parts. Lottie's man was playing with another. So far as the public was concerned that was about all there was to it.

But know ye, that Fatty Arbuckle, Roscoe he wishes to be called of late,

rented the handsome home on West Adams Street, formerly occupied by Theda Bara. In fact it is said that Fatty sleeps in the vampire's bed, which may or may not, weave his dreams with vampires and their dangerous moods.

Fatty recently gave a party. He gives a lot of them. There were picture girls galore and the wine flowed red and every other way, for Roscoe is no derelict of a host.

It didn't take twenty-four hours for Dame Rumor and her children to scatter the news that "there was some runction among the 'Janes' out to Arbuckle's joint last night."

Just how it started was lost in the hurry of getting down to the absolute certainty that Lottie Pickford and another girl staged one of the prettiest scraps seen since Charlie Chaplin tried to lick his wife's manager at the Alexandria hotel recently. In fact the efforts of Charlie as a pugilist are said to have been nil compared with the flavor that Lottie and her rival put up. It wasn't exactly Lottie's rival either, so the story goes.

Seems that Lottie and another girl were talking in one of the bedrooms regarding the "cat" who had vamped the temporary affections of Lottie's former beau. A third girl was lying, supposedly asleep. She arose suddenly and challenged, in behalf of her vamping friend, what Lottie had said. Then the riot started. One of our well known artists stated next day that it was the best he had seen since Young George and Steve Dalton first met at Jack Doyle's. Anyone taking a good look at Lottie would opine that the girl, when angry, might be worth a bet in the real money book.

Not much has been heard of Jack Pickford since he became mixed up in the war time mess. It was no Hollywood secret that Jack was not an over welcome visitor at the home of Mary and her mother for some time. Things may have been calmed over since Mary settled down with Doug, or rather tried to settle down with him.

Olive Thomas, Jack's wife, recently returned from New York and Jack met her with a Whiz Bang of a new car. Jack claims it cost him bucks to the number of ten thou. Speaking of automobiles, Roscoe Arbuckle recently received a specially designed motor car that is a humdinger. The price is

reportedly at \$25,000. If it didn't cost that much it sure looks it. thousands of people viewed the monstrosity for a week in the windows of the motor works where it was turned out.

Of course the machine is simply to be used as an ad for the prolific Fat. Some of the last words in autos have been seen around here, but they all faded to a sickly, measly brown when Arbuckle's came into prominence. Arbuckle says he intends dazzling Broadway with it. What may help some, if he uses it in New York, is the license number, which was displayed while the car stood on exhibition here. The number was "606."

"United Artists," the "Big Four" and "Associated Directors" are familiar terms here. Speaking of United Artists, we must pause at mention of Charlie Chaplin and Mildred Harris. They are not united, not so anyone can notice.

Shortly after their marriage last year, the doll-like little Mildred and her mother were the observed of all observers at the fashionable St. Catherine hotel, the Wrigley's island palace at Catalina. Wistful indeed, appeared the little girl as she sat day after day gazing across the Pacific blue whence fly the famous Chaplin hydroplanes from the mainland. The hydroplanes are a venture of Sid Chaplin. Charlie is not in on the deal, though he makes the air trip occasionally.

But never did Charlie appear to the knowledge of the vastly interested hotel habitues. Ever with her slender, keen looking mother, the bride waited in vain for her Lochinvar. Occasionally she danced with a visiting picture personage. But Charlie--he came not.

Friends--friends always spread bad news--whispered that something was wrong. The St. Catherine seemed a haven, welcome or not, of disconsolate women. On the broad veranda sat the woman discarded by Earl Williams. Inquisitive society dames raised their very proper eyebrows as they passed and the mournful looking girl appeared as lonesome as any girl could feel, even though Earl had, through his lawyers, handed over a settlement admitted to be at least \$40,000.

Charlie Chaplin has all the earmarks of a rather distraught young man. He lives at the Los Angeles Athletic Club. From his studio comes the word

that though he finally is working at another picture, his people never know whether it will be a week or a month before he shows up to don the old derby and the familiar shoes.

The fight between Chaplin and Manager Young of Mildred Chaplin was funny. Young is fat and the idea of Chaplin trying to use his fists is funnier than anything he ever did in pictures. Just what the real cause of combat was hasn't been thoroughly dissected by the scandal mongers. Young says he was trying to protect Mrs. Chaplin from annoyance by her husband. Chaplin says Young is a big stiff and that he (Chaplin) certainly never annoyed his wife. He hasn't--in public--because they never appear together.

Just how the divorce proceedings will work out nobody knows. It is true that Chaplin wishes he was out of it. It is believed that Mrs. Chaplin's mother is somewhat of a business woman and will have considerable to say before the bones of the affair have rattled their last.

Fairbanks and Chaplin are very close friends. One of the newspapers recently published a picture of Mary, Doug and Charlie, purporting to be one taken immediately after the marriage, when Chaplin went to the train with them as they left for an alleged brief scurry to some quiet haunt. As a matter of fact the picture was one taken at the time the trio were leaving on their famous Liberty Loan jaunt, upon which momentous trip Doug and Mary are supposed to have "fallen" for each other good and hard.

Poor Owen Moore has become a public goat. The former husband of Mary is a likable enough fellow, quiet and with a winning way that can't restrain the undoubtable sadness which lurks in a pair of wistful eyes. By the way, ninety-nine women out of a hundred probably would "kotow" to Moore so far as looks are concerned, rather than to Fairbanks. Moore is well set up and handsome in a masculine way. Doug never could be called a thing of beauty and most of his cowboys display better physical form than the agile laughmaker.

All the testimony given by Mary at Minden would tend to indicate that the hour in which Owen did not inject a lot of booze into himself, was a rare hour indeed. If Mary asked Owen to come back to her as often as she says she

did; figuring he was the lush as she sets forth, then indeed Owen, if he loves the girl, hasn't much of a kick coming.

The general opinion appears to be that Moore had the love of Mary very much at heart but through his tendency for liquor, finally lost out. Those who really know Mary Pickford swear by the character of the girl. Those who really know Moore can't dislike him. They simply figure he was his own worst enemy and that in the desperate moments of her mental torture the girl grew to care for the light-hearted Fairbanks and his blithesome way.

Poor Owen is just now figuring in a suit for damages brought by someone from whom he rented a house. The owners claim that everything was in a mess when they came back and that an overflow of booze has considerably depreciated the furniture.

Another Hollywood "Secret" has been shattered. It seems that a perfectly good married man went on a visit to his "Secret" and before the evening was done he was driving a joyful bunch of other men, with their "Secrets," in his latest buzz wagon.

Everything would have been O.K. but for the fact that the happy hubby permitted his own "Secret" to sit in the back seat while helping the other reveling benedicts to deliver their "Secrets" home. It appears that the "Secret" of the car-owner went to sleep in her recess in the rear of the car.

The night was foggy. So was the brain of this "perfectly good" married man. He parked the car in his garage, forgetting all about the "Secret" lying asleep in the back seat. Next morning a "perfectly trusting" wife was surprised, when she stepped onto the bungalow rear, to see a "perfectly wild Secret" dashing madly out of the garage, clad in anything but up-to-date morning garb.

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February 3, 1922

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

William D. Taylor, movie director, found shot to death in his Los Angeles home, was well known among motion picture men of Chicago. Among the leaders who knew Mr. Taylor is David Wark Griffith.

"He was always looked upon as highly progressive in his principles and was undoubtedly one of the best directors in the profession," said Mr. Griffith yesterday. "He was with Famous Players for a long time and did wonderful work for them. His profession has lost one of its leaders.

Even though it should develop Taylor was slain through a jealousy motive, that fact should not lead the public to hold a blot against Hollywood, it being a mistake to picture the Los Angeles movie colony as a seamy center of decadence, Mr. Griffith maintained.

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February 10, 1922

CINCINNATI COMMERCIAL TRIBUNE

"The motion picture industry should not be condemned because one or two persons out of its personnel of many thousand workers have been guilty of indiscreet acts," David Wark Griffith, premier motion picture director of America, said yesterday in discussing some of the crimes that have shaken filmdom to its foundations. "The rotters should be kicked out of the business, and sooner or later they will be.

"The fact that they have managed to get in will not disgrace the industry; it is too big for that. Ministers sometimes get into scrapes, but that doesn't mean the Christian religion is disgraced forever."

Mr. Griffith said that he had never known, seen or talked to William Desmond Taylor, film director, slain recently in his Los Angeles home. He added that he had not been in California for three years, and that none of

his pictures had been made there during the last six years.

"All I know about Hollywood," he said in answer to a question, "is what I have read in the papers. But I imagine there must be some fire where there is so much smoke."

The famous director visited the Shubert Theater, where his latest production, "Orphans of the Storm," is being shown, and spoke to the crowd between acts. He told his audience that the strongest plot for a motion picture was "the simple, old-fashioned love story about nothing in particular."

Mr. Griffith was taken to the City Hall yesterday by Edward Rowland, manager of the Schubert Theater, and welcomed by Mayor George P. Carrol.

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February 12, 1922
J.B. Calvo
DAYTON JOURNAL

...David Wark Griffith has made a sincere effort to give productions that are both staged and acted--not just hastily thrown together scenes paraded before fast-clicking cameras.

In an interview this week Mr. Griffith predicted that just such things at the Taylor murder and the Arbuckle disgrace would hasten to improve the movies by driving from the profession those whose only assets were shapely legs or baby-doll faces.

"With the novelty wearing off, the public is demanding acting, not paint and powder and wide-staring eyes," Mr. Griffith said. "Baby-doll faces have had their day and the movie of tomorrow will be one that will be staged and rehearsed and produced with the greatest attention to detail. In other words, moving pictures of tomorrow will contain actors and actresses, not mere pretty marionettes."

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February 16, 1922

NEW YORK TELEGRAPH

Warning his audience against the "think as I think; do as I do" fanatical minority, David Wark Griffith, moving picture producer, yesterday made a general defense of the industry in which he is such a prominent figure and pleaded for a greater tolerance at a luncheon of the Advertising Club of New York at its headquarters, 47 East Twenty-Fifth Street.

Mr. Griffith did not undertake to reply specifically to the charges of the Rev. Dr. John Roach Straton, not even alluding to his attack on the stage and the films. Nor did he attempt a detailed defense of the moving picture colony at Hollywood.

Mr. Griffith said, in fact, that he knew nothing about Hollywood, hadn't been there in four years and didn't know very many film people. He has known and does know women and men in the moving picture game who are "as sweet and clean as any women in the world," women that any of the men present would be glad to have as wives or sisters.

Referring to his production of "Intolerance," which deals with the old witchcraft persecutions, Mr. Griffith said that he did not enjoy producing that story, but considered it a duty to do so.

"Let one, two or three start on the mad hunt and the whole pack is again heard," continued Mr. Griffith; "and how they hunt them down and persecute them! History tells us that nine million men and women fell victims of this dread thing. How they made them suffer! They dismembered the living, tore nails from their finger--all for religion. Yet this was not religion.

"It was the class that says 'Think as I think, do as I do,' and if you do not think as they think and do as they do off comes your head.

"This type of man is very much alive in America today. We who have a land and a Constitution bought by the blood of countless sacrifices must be on our guard lest these 'think-as-I-think-do-as-I-do' people rob us of this heritage.

"The power of the sincere fanatical minority is tremendous, and lest we

watch our step law will be added to law to further circumvent our liberties. One law and then another law is put on the statute books to make people good by law--a gross, absurd impossibility. Laws that are not obeyed are disregarded until we lose respect for all laws.

"No, I don't know anything about the morals of Hollywood, but I was raised in a strict Methodist family in Kentucky. It was the strictest sort of a family. Theatres and dances were barred absolutely and I knew how good those good men and women were. I know men and women engaged in producing motion pictures that you or I would be glad to have in our families.

"This sounds like a defense of the movies. But there should be no defense. Shall we attack banks when a banker gets into the newspapers or the church when a minister gets into the newspapers? There is nothing new in finding conditions such as the papers have been telling about recently. In this morning's paper I saw that a priest had been arrested charged with the murder of his brother. A few days ago I read that the records of the Atlanta penitentiary show three minister inmates to each actor.

"Neither the actor nor the minister should be in prison. It doesn't mean anything against the religion of Christ if occasionally a minister falls from grace. The moving picture people are just the same as all the other humans who people this earth. They are just as high as the plumber, the bricklayer or the farmer and just as low as those who dream of [...] beauty and gold to their idealism. I have seen such sweet ideals, such sweet dreams in our business. This is not just talk, but the plain truth."

Mr. Griffith explained his lack of knowledge of Hollywood gossip by saying that his work occupied his time from fourteen to fifteen hours each day.

Frank Feldman, president of the club, in presenting Mr. Griffith introduced him as the dean of the motion picture business and declared that if that industry had more Griffiths it would not have had many of the troubles of the last few years.

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March 3, 1922

BUFFALO EXPRESS

"In this uneasy day, with dissatisfaction on all sides, it may be well for us to see that nothing happens to jeopardize our glorious freedom and destroy our present form of democratic government."

This statement was made by David Wark Griffith, motion picture producer, who was in Buffalo yesterday on private business and spoke to audiences at the Criterion theater, where his latest film spectacle, Orphans of the Storm, is now being shown.

Mr. Griffith is fearful of the rampant reformer and of well organized and aggressive minorities.

"We should be on guard against the minority tyrant--the 'think as I think, do as I do, eat as I eat and drink as I drink' individual," said the producer in his speech, "for this man will bring upon our country turmoil quicker than any other. There is only one law which amounts to anything, the law of human feeling; the law of love for one another. You cannot make people good by law. We are turning out repressive laws very fast nowadays and the result is we are developing a marked disrespect for law. Unless checked we might become a people without any regard for law at all."

Mr. Griffith was a luncheon guest of Mayor Schwab at the Lafayette at noon and was a dinner guest of friends in the evening.

"Prohibition is causing a lot of dissatisfaction in this country," he declared. "People of little or no means feel that their well-to-do neighbors are enabled to secure liquor simply because they have the price, and this makes for class feeling. If there is widespread disrespect for law and bad feeling between classes, a revolution may result."

He said he knew little personally of conditions in Hollywood, Cal, and that he had not been there in three years. "Since reading in the newspapers of the latest scandal there," he continued, "I have read of three preachers who went wrong, but it doesn't follow that all preachers should be ostracized. In every calling there are people who are good and there are others who are

rotten, and this applies to the motion picture business. In any event, the motion picture industry is too big and too essential to be killed by the acts of a few irresponsible persons."

Mr. Griffith paid his respects also to reformers as a group. "Men don't become reformers until they are 50 years old," he said. "Then they expect youth to be governed according to the infirmities of age. It isn't fair.

"My people wanted me to become a minister, and they gave me the training, but I strayed from the path. All the other members of the family grew up to be pious, and one of my sisters never set foot in a theater until she was 35 years old, and then it was to see a picture which I had produced."

Back issues of Taylorology are available on the Web at any of the following:

<http://www.angelfire.com/az/Taylorology/>

<http://www.etext.org/Zines/ASCII/Taylorology/>

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Full text searches of back issues can be done at <http://www.etext.org/Zines/> or at <http://www.silent-movies.com/search.html>. For more information about Taylor, see

WILLIAM DESMOND TAYLOR: A DOSSIER (Scarecrow Press, 1991)

* T A Y L O R O L O G Y *
* A Continuing Exploration of the Life and Death of William Desmond Taylor *
* *
* Issue 89 -- May 2000 Editor: Bruce Long *
* TAYLOROLOGY may be freely distributed *

CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE:

Gareth Hughes
James Kirkwood

What is TAYLOROLOGY?

TAYLOROLOGY is a newsletter focusing on the life and death of William Desmond Taylor, a top Paramount film director in early Hollywood who was shot to death on February 1, 1922. His unsolved murder was one of Hollywood's major scandals. This newsletter will deal with: (a) The facts of Taylor's life; (b) The facts and rumors of Taylor's murder; (c) The impact of the Taylor murder on Hollywood and the nation; (d) Taylor's associates and the Hollywood silent film industry in which Taylor worked. Primary emphasis will be given toward reprinting, referencing and analyzing source material, and sifting it for accuracy.

Gareth Hughes

As indicated in TAYLOROLOGY #5, actor Gareth Hughes was reportedly implicated in the William Desmond Taylor murder by statements attributed to Honore Connette. The following are some contemporary interviews with Hughes which were published during 1921 and 1922. Of particular interest, aside from the glimpse into Hughes' personality, is the mention that Hughes smoked gold-tipped cigarettes.

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February 1921

Lillian Montanye

MOTION PICTURE CLASSIC

Hamlet, Himself

A friend of mine once strove desperately for adequate terms in which to describe a friend of his, then appearing on the stage as Benjamin in "Joseph and his Brethren." "He looks exactly like a picture of Jesus in the doctor's office!" he enthused.

"You are probably referring," I said witheringly, "to the event of the boy Jesus sitting with the learned men in the temple. But I know what you mean."

I had not then met Gareth Hughes, but when I did, my friend's remark came back to me as vagrant bits of inconsequence have a way of doing, and seemed oddly apt. The young actor has a rarely spirituelle face--vivid, yet grave--the face of one who dreams dreams and sees visions. He has a shock of tumbled brown hair, wide brown eyes, his hands, that keynote to character, delicately formed with tapering, sensitive fingers. His personality is one of exquisite charm--yet he does not at all suggest the feminine. He is the personification of sweet and enthusiastic youth, its hopes, its ideals, its sensitiveness and beyond, one senses manly sincerity, forceful purpose.

He is a true Welshman, Gareth Hughes, which accounts for many things: his love of beauty; his musical enunciation; his quite noticeable accent, especially when carried away by his enthusiasms, which are many. He spoke nothing but Welsh, he told me, until he was twelve years old. He was then placed in school in London and later in Paris, where he remained until he joined the Welsh Players, finally coming to America with them.

After a tour with the Welsh Players came his delightful characterization of Ariel in "Caliban" in New York City's Shakespeare Tercentenary. Following

this, as a featured player in "Joseph and his Brethren," "Margaret Schiller," "Salome," "Moloch," "The Guilty Man," with the Irish Players in "Red Turf," in Strindberg's "Easter," in the title role of Richard Ordynski's "Everyman," he won the plaudits of press and people. His last stage appearance was a starring role in "Dark Rosaleen," a play written for him by Whitford Kane. Not long after its New York opening, young Hughes left the cast to enter pictures. Not because he wanted to give up the brilliant stage career, then beginning, but, being physically at low ebb, he needed the change, the outdoor life and more regular hours promised him in this new form of his profession.

During his brief picture career he has scored some notable successes: as Billy in "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," with Marguerite Clark; as leading man for Florence Reed in "The Woman Under Oath"; with Norma Talmadge in "Isle of Conquest." He then went to the Coast, where he did "Eyes of Youth," with Clara Kimball Young; "A Chorus Girl's Romance," with Viola Dana, and "White Ashes," with Cleo Madison.

"And then," related the young actor, eyes aglow, "things happened fast. Metro invited me to sign a long-term starring contract, which I did. And immediately afterward Famous Players decided to produce 'Sentimental Tommy' here in the East, and asked me to do the title role, which the Metro people very kindly consented to let me do. And then I had an attack of--what you call appendicitis. The doctors said the only safe way was to be operated on. But when I found I could really come East and do Tommy, I became quite fit, and said the dom [sic] operation could go hang--and here I am! You see, next to my Shakespeare, whom I know by heart, I love Barrie. Ever since I created the part of the son on the stage in 'The New Word,' I have longed to do another Barrie play."

"And 'The Little Minister,' and Peter in 'Peter Pan.'" I soliloquized, visualizing the ardent, sensitive face, the whimsy race--

"Yes, yes," he asserted eagerly. "I am hoping to do them both some day. I like the pictures and see a big, big chance. There is great opportunity for real artistry on the screen. But I could not entirely give up the stage.

It has meant too much--it is a part of my life. So many things I want to do--but there seems to be not half time enough to do them in. I love to use my imagination--to dream: to visualize Sir Galahad, a Prince Chap, Sir Lancelot, Don Quixote--many others."

"And your pet ambition--rainbow's end--your dream come true?"

"Shakespeare--in roles that suit me, of course, Romeo, for instance--and especially Hamlet. In fact," he said, a bit wistfully, "I did almost play Romeo--was in rehearsal when the chance came to go to the Coast to do 'Eyes of Youth' with Miss Young. So, for the sake of my health, also my pocketbook--I said 'Goodbye Romeo,' and went.

"But some day, not too far distant, I hope, I shall play Hamlet--there's no turning aside from that. A BOY Hamlet--and I shall play it surrounded by all the splendid gorgeousness of royalty, too. Draperies of royal purple, the glitter of gold and tinsel, the blare of trumpets. I don't care for the 'new' in art--a stage set with a table, a chair, a bit of drapery--I don't think that pomp, pageantry and grandeur detract from the spoken work. The actor needs the atmosphere of beauty and artistry.

"Just now, we hear much of the new in art. Art is beauty--and beauty is always new. Real art, real beauty, is ageless, deathless. It is something that is handed down from one generation to another and cannot be destroyed--nor can anything take its place. What about 'old' music--the works of Chopin, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Liszt and others? What about old paintings--old literature--old architecture? What about our great artists of the stage--Booth, Irving, Mantell, Jefferson, Bernhardt? We don't need a new standard of beauty," he concluded convincingly.

"Perhaps it's my medieval name," he said, "or perhaps it's my Welsh ancestry--but beauty is to me such a tangible thing--and all my life I've longed and striven to express it rightly. And now--I must go back to the studio. I hope you will see and like me as Tommy."

"And Hamlet--"

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August 1921

Hazel Simpson Naylor

MOTION PICTURE CLASSIC

Sentiments of a Woman Hater

Geniuses are queer beings. It seems impossible for them to eat, drink, marry or die like every-day people. Neither can every-day people write a story or paint a picture or act a drama that brings the heart of you into your throat to strangle you with unexplainable emotions.

So widely diverse are the two types that neither can completely understand the other. That is why I ask your indulgence while I paint this word portrait of Gareth Hughes.

Mr. Hughes is a genius.

He was so proclaimed on the stage long before the cinema heralded him as one, because of his acting in "The Chorus Girl's Romance," and "Sentimental Tommy." As far back as 1914, he was lauded by New York critics for his beautiful performances in "Moloch," "Everyman," with Elsie Ferguson in "Margaret Schiller," in "Caliban," in Barrie's "The New Word," in "The Guilty Man," and "Easter," by Strindberg.

This long list of stage success might give you the impression of a veteran player. Gareth Hughes is, I believe, precisely twenty-three years old. On the screen he looks younger, in real life he looks older.

There is a weary air about him, as if all mundane things were SO trying. He seems absolutely passionless. I cannot imagine him indulging in great loves or great enthusiasm. He seems to me as a man apart. I should have said boy--for he lacks the physical vigor and muscular development that come with manhood.

Like many of the really great actors, Gareth Hughes is most sincere when he is acting. Whether he was playing with me, trying to assume a pose of boredom or was simply honestly shy at being interviewed, I could not ascertain, no matter how hard I tried to penetrate beneath his placid calm.

Even my intuition, which has frequently helped me, was as useless as a spent shell to penetrate the armor with which he had girded his heart and his soul.

Yet stop and consider Percy Busse Shelly, Byron, Oscar Wilde--it is well known that their art, their poems were the most beautifully ideal part of their lives.

And thus I feel about Gareth Hughes, his acting is the most real part of him; in fact, it is ALL there is to him. He lives the life of a dreamer, a visionary. I doubt if the realities of life ever touch him.

"I AM 'Sentimental Tommy,'" he told me when I asked him concerning his characterization of Tommy. And so when you see "Sentimental Tommy" on the screen you will come nearer to knowing the real Gareth Hughes than at any other time.

Mr. Hughes has a pet Airedale, which he calls Barrie. "I adore Barrie's plays," he told me, "but I like 'Peter Pan' best of all. They may let me play Peter. Wouldn't that be wonderful? I can't imagine any greater joy."

His pride in his work is childlike. His singular faith is childlike; he seems helpless when it comes to running up against the actualities of existence. He is strangely unaffected and simple in his tastes. Being alone in the country is one thing he really loves. The day I talked to him he was just moving into his new lodge out in lovely Laurel Canyon, and he remarked: "I love the country, its fresh air and being away from the noise and bustle of the city. I don't like crowds of people, I like to be alone."

"But won't you get lonesome?" I protested.

"Why, no--I'll have my chauffeur sleeping in the next room," he answered ingeniously.

"I know," I explained carefully, "but wouldn't you like the companionship of a wife?"

"No, thank you," he said, with the greatest amount of vehemence I had been able to draw from him. "I keep away from the girls. They are dangerous. They do nothing but cause trouble. I have never seen a happy marriage. I don't believe in marriage. I believe in FREE LOVE."

Had he dropped a bomb at my feet I could not have been more upset. And

then I looked at the slim, boyish figure sitting uncomfortably in front of me, twisting absent-mindedly at his shell-rimmed glasses. Words cannot describe what a picture of absolute innocence he presented.

And yet in his very innocence and dreamy unworldliness I imagine he could be ruthless, in a forgetful sort of way, just as the farmer looking forward to a crop of golden wheat is ruthless in his uprooting of the weeds that lie in his fields.

"I cannot know people very well and not fight with them," Mr. Hughes went on, "and yet I couldn't be interested in them if I couldn't quarrel with them." And he looked so harmless I failed to imagine him quarreling with anyone.

"I can't bear mediocrity in the theater," he went on. "I do so long to do big things on the screen--'Peter Pan,' 'David Copperfield,' 'Hamlet.' Why not? The producers say the public won't go to see the classics. Yet look at the success of 'Sentimental Tommy.' I do hope it pays, then it will prove that the producers don't know what they are talking about."

The 'phone interrupted.

"Yes, I'll be right there," then turning to me helplessly, "it's my chauffeur. I have to go down town and buy two beds and a dozen sheets and pillow-cases. Isn't it exasperating? You have to go? You DROVE your car? Oh, how brave. I couldn't possibly drive. Just think of knowing how to work all those levers at once. I haven't BRAINS enough to drive a car, I have to hire a chauffeur."

Yet, I would be willing to bet that he knows the lines of every great play, forwards and backwards.

* * * * *

January 1922
Willis Goldbeck
MOTION PICTURE

The Scarlet Thread

One thing there is that the arbiters of starred destinies must learn: that genius and fried fish are immiscible. Thus, to my dying day I shall probably associate Gareth Hughes, above all the star fantastic, with the clamor and smells of a cheap Hollywood restaurant.

We sat there on either side of a greasy table, in a booth of the cafe that caters to the players of the Metro studio, Gareth hitching spasmodically at his shell-rimmed spectacles and I tapping the table top, stupidly enough, with my fork. It was not an auspicious beginning.

But--what it was, the surprisingly palatable chicken sandwich, Gareth's finesse, my own interest suddenly aroused, I do not know--I found presently that we were drifting along on a comfortable, unconstrained tide of conversation. The hot restaurant, the clatter and clash of mouths and things entering therein, gradually faded from my consciousness, irised out, so to speak, until my attention was centered wholly on the remarkable youth opposite me.

One is at once aware of a detachment in Gareth which effectually prevents the casualist from ever knowing him, ever obtaining a complete realization of his thoughts. His mind is erratic, here and yon, pausing with the scintillant flutter of a butterfly upon fifty different subjects within the minute. His conversation knows no laws, no limits. He is a free booter, conducting piratical excursions upon whatever orderly convoy of thought you may be pursuing, interrupting mercilessly, victimizing your words for his own aggrandizement. Your talk of him, be it praise or pillory, is his loot. He is a supreme egotist, with egotism's only vindication--artistry.

One must acknowledge, if one would do Gareth justice, that he cannot be judged by normal standards. To the real artist our thunderously American quality of "normalcy" is abhorrent, deadly. It is a confession of our own sterility as an artistic nation. of our subservience to throttling conventions. It is like those huge bottle-shaped instruments in which the Comprachios of "Claire De Lune" confined growing human beings until they had assumed the shape of their horrid prisons. Our reformists are the

Comprachios of our souls.

Gareth said none of these things to me. On the contrary he has recognized his variance with our standardized manhood and has set about, perhaps unconsciously, certainly in vain, to reshape himself. His efforts, finding outlets in moods, express themselves, amusingly, in his clothes.

I knew him first in a bulging thing of Harris tweed. He wore knickers and golf stockings huge with angora fuzz. He dangled a gold pencil. He blasphemed under his breath, absently, with the innocence that makes anathema on a cherub's lips a hymn of purity. He addressed two girls who were in the company but whom he had not known for more than an hour as "dear," quite as absently. He hitched nervously at his spectacles. He was the dilettante who adores to walk in "the beautiful country! I love it!" He carried a heavy dog leash. He had a dog, Barrie, somewhere, he told us vaguely--down in his car, he thought, with his man. It didn't matter. He had the leash.

But this last time, at the studio, he was the horseman. He wore heavy riding boots and carried a quirt with which he smacked them resoundingly and with frequent relish. He had no intention, so far as I know, of riding that morning. But he was in the mood. Ergo! He dressed it!

"Until two weeks ago," he said, in his queer clipped little accent, "I never rode. I have ridden every day since. I am a bit sore perhaps, but I love it. Oh, I LOVE it!"

His moods seem all alike in that quality of fleeting fervor. One wonders, perhaps extraneously, upon the lady who might one day be loved like that.

One ceases much of his wondering when he learns that Gareth has been upon the stage, here and abroad, since early childhood. There has been no variation in his life to mark the passing of childhood and the establishment of maturity. His youth has been his maturity and his maturity his youth, so far as those circumstances which mold the character are concerned. Perhaps that is the secret of his astonishing appearance. It is today--when he is twenty-three--what it must have been when he was fifteen.

Gareth is a supreme egotist, yet he can discuss the vanity of actors dispassionately. That is because his egotism is intense interest, not bombast. It has that same quality of detachment that characterizes Gareth himself. He is concerned, mightily delighted, with the mechanism of his being. He is bored when you turn the talk toward other things. But it is always as one might be toward a hobby, a thing apart. He seems to hold himself in continual perspective, as though he were regarding a cherished portrait not quite complete. A stroke of the brush here, an erasure there, to heighten an effect. His self-concern is that.

For vanity that is unthinking, intolerant, he has contempt, mingled with compassion.

"I was that way myself once," he said, "--until they kicked it out of me. Now, the only thing I think of is this." He rubbed his fingers together, as though he were massaging crisp greenbacks. "That's all."

But that is merely a pleasurable conceit. Where his art is concerned, he is ruthless. The question of Peter Pan came up. I ran over a list of famous stars, all of them feminine, who had been variously nominated for the part. He rejected them all, summarily. A woman, he says, should not be permitted to play it. It is only the Maude Adams tradition that justifies even the consideration of women. He believes that he should play the part!

I think he is quite impersonal about it. He knows his capacity. He knows his Barrie. And Peter Pan, say what you will, WAS a boy. Gareth could implant that touch of eeriness that Barrie intended. The women could implant only--femininity. One excepts, always, Mary Pickford.

It was Mrs. Fiske who saw in Gareth's performance in "Moloch," a stage play, the reawakening of genius upon the stage, in the new generation.

In the main, he seems bored. One thinks inevitably of Dorian Gray, and of the lesser known Lord Reggie in Hichens' "The Green Carnation." Indeed, he is of the identical age of the latter, with much of that astonishing beauty of youth, that hint of mad scarlet things, about him. He fails in brilliance, but that is perhaps because he has no Esmee to echo.

He remarked suddenly--suddenness is his conversation's most effective

riposte--that his religion was Episcopalian.

"Are you sincere in it?" I asked. It seemed the most likely way to evoke interest from a dry subject.

The question seemed to surprise Gareth. He is content with making statements, not explaining them. Explanations, I imagine, tire him. He stared at me a moment before replying.

"Yes," he said, finally, hitching again at his glasses. Then, after a pause, "--as sincere as I am in anything." He smiled faintly.

"Have you met Peter, the Man of God?" he asked, again suddenly.

I knew of him--a long-haired hermit, perpetually barefoot; clothed to meet the conventions, but no further. He did odd jobs about the studios.

"I met him yesterday," said Gareth. "He said to me, 'Ah, me bhye, I can see health in ye, and clane livin'. White lights there be about ye. Make good, clane pictures, me bhye, and the Lord'll bless ye.' He was standing with his shovel like a staff--in a wagon of manure." Gareth paused. "The Man of God, with his feet in a manure pile," he finished, staring at me absently.

"You speak in parables!" I murmured.

But already his mind was wandering off at another tangent.

One senses, through all the shifting fronts that Gareth presents, the immutable scarlet thread of artistry. That is the supreme fact of his being. It is perhaps too soon to call it genius. To me, Gareth is a receptive rather than a creative artist. He is vitalized by impressions. He seems to be the more beautiful echo of some far-sounding reality. One might liken him to a composite, containing infinite portraiture of men, with the power to bring any one of them to the fore at will. Passive, with no one phase predominant, he is a riddle.

I should not be surprised one day to see his beautiful face of a boy drop off, a mask. Beneath one might find--anything.

He is a grotesque mantled with divinity--the divinity of youth.

* * * * *

October 1922

PICTURES AND PICTUREGOER

Meet Sentimental Tommy

I first gazed on Gareth Hughes over a littered kitchen table, and although his laughing brown eyes did not at that moment suggest his quixotic temperament, it was his surroundings that betrayed his fanciful appreciation of life. He had imbued even domesticity with an unconventional suggestion of artistry. Blue walls and orange curtains, white enameled stoves and an eighteenth-century bow-legged table, supporting a twentieth-century rolling-pin, certainly have a touch of fantasy in a kitchen. That was Gareth's atonement to the arts for straying into the mundane affairs of cookery. Cookery is one of his favourite hobbies, but he insists on cooking cabbages or cakes amidst an atmosphere of futuristic effects.

He wiped his long, tapering fingers free from baking-powder and replaced a glinting amethyst ring on his right hand as a preliminary to shaking hands. Baking-powder and barbaric jewelry, this boy with the credulous, eager expression of youth was a continual contradiction.

"I had that made for 'Sentimental Tommy,'" he explained noticing my scrutiny of the huge jewel.

He eyed it himself with the proud expression of a boy displaying a particularly coveted specimen of glass marble.

Then the swift, transient suggestion of irresponsible youth passed. He became the grave, thoughtful philosopher.

"I often think that there is such a thing as reincarnation, and that I in some former life was a priest," he said, with a shy smile. "I love jewels that suggest resplendent altar-cloths and stained-glass windows. One day I shall fit up one of my rooms as a cloister."

It was easy to realise why Cecil B. De Mille called Gareth Hughes the "young idealist." Yet there is nothing solid or tangible in this description of the puzzling Metro "star." For Gareth's mind flits from one mood to

another like a butterfly. He is a swift series of character studies, each one, despite its transience, being very convincing whilst it pleases him to adopt each individual pose.

"What would you like me to talk about?" he asked suddenly, as we left the blue-and-orange kitchen and passed along the corridor that led to his den, with its tiger-skin rugs and silk-covered divans.

The question struck me as being humorous.

It would have been as sensible to have asked Don Quixote to have postponed his tilting at windmills until he had assimilated the riding-school technique of a lancers' sergeant-major, as to endeavour to bind Gareth Hughes down to any detailed line of thought.

"Your past experiences on the films and your future ambitions," I suggested, with the realisation that whatever I said could not stem his swift, ever-changing flow of conversation and direct it into any special channels.

He had forgotten his question almost as soon as he had spoken.

Crossing to a gleaming piano of polished mahogany, he commenced to play softly.

He chattered as he played, for this versatile young man has no need to concentrate on a musical score. He never learned music, but played naturally from his earliest boyhood.

"Do you recognise this old Welsh air?" he said. "I learned it when I was a boy living in the Welsh hills where I was born. That was twenty-three years ago."

As his fingers strayed over the keys he became reminiscent, and told me that acting first claimed him when he was fourteen and he appeared on the stage in Wales. Then, with the Welsh Players, he went to London, and later to New York. In those days his prominent stage successes were "Little Miss Llewellyn," "The Joneses," "Dark Rosalind," and "The Change."

He was serious when he spoke with pride of having created the role of the young son in J. M. Barrie's "The New Word." A moment later his thoughts flashed off at a tangent.

"Have you seen J. M. Barrie?" he asked suddenly, his customary shy smile breaking into a happy grin.

I confessed that I had not met the famous creator of Peter Pan, the immortal character whose lovable spirit of boyhood is so largely reflected in Gareth Hughes.

"Then you must meet him now," said my mercurial host, emitting a shrill whistle.

A shaggy-coated Airedale lumbered into the room and thrust a friendly damp nose into my hand.

Gareth explained that he called this intelligent canine "Barrie" because, despite the fact that he played in many film pictures before he starred in 'Sentimental Tommy,' he always regards the latter picture as his first big chance on the silver sheet.

When "Barrie" had comfortably curled himself up on Gareth's immaculate knees, my host told me of his early days before fame came to him in the early twenties, and a fortune sufficient to build his picturesque house in the wooded Laurel Canyon of the Californian hills and to house two splendid cars in the garage adjacent to his home.

Gareth has the power to forcibly convey to his listeners his mood of the moment, just as he radiates emotions from the screen.

The wistfulness in his searching brown eyes inspired my sympathy as he related how he had known poverty in his early days in New York.

"I have known what it is to starve in a garret," he confessed.

I looked at his carefully polished pink finger-nails, his modish, immaculate clothes that revealed the sybarite, and realised that beneath his effervescent nature there was strength of purpose that had lifted him to success, despite the despair that privations must have brought to one so intolerant of poverty.

"At first I played small parts in the film studios, but I was always confident that fame would one day come my way. My first real screen part was in 'Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch,' with Marguerite Clark; and 'Eyes of Youth,' in which I played with that incomparable artiste, Clara Kimball

Young, was another early milestone in my career."

"Your favourite screen artiste?" I queried, his enthusiasm in the direction of "Clara Kimball Young" inspiring my trend of thought.

"Ben Turpin," said Gareth unhesitatingly.

I gasped and studied his serious face for the flicker of humour that I felt sure would be there. He was joking, I imagined.

His next sentence swept aside my doubts.

"I think he's great," enthused Gareth, bending forward in his chair, with disastrous results to the somnolent "Barrie," who fell a disgruntled heap on to the onyx and silver carpet.

"I went to see 'A Small Town Idol' seven times because he was so funny in it. Yet I am not in love with pictures generally. 'Sentimental Tommy' is the only one in which I appear that I have seen from beginning to end."

I settled back on the orange cushions of Gareth's comfortable divan, and let the probing art of the interviewer look after itself. This irrepressible host of mine was far more entertaining and surprising when he was left alone to go his own way.

"Lasky's sent for me to come to New York to star in 'Sentimental Tommy,'" he told me. "At that time I was Viola Dana's leading man, and I played in 'A Chorus Girl's Romance,' 'Life's Darn Funny,' and 'The Lure of Youth.'"

"'Garments of Truth' and 'The Hunch' followed after that, and shortly I am starting work on 'Kick In' with May McAvoy, Betty Compson, and Bert Lytell.

"May McAvoy and I are great friends. We both had our big chance together in 'Sentimental Tommy,' and that has inspired a happy comradeship between us."

"They say," I interrupted, "that you are a woman hater."

Gareth raised his slim hands in laughing protest.

"Never. In fact," he added in a stage whisper, "I am searching for a wife. I am sufficiently an idealist to know that marriage is a great influence for success in a man's life if he finds the real happiness that the

right woman can bring."

I appreciated the desire for secrecy that his lowered tones suggested. Were the world to know that handsome, lovable Gareth Hughes was looking for a wife, he would be swamped by letters from hopeful applicants for the coveted position.

"If I have any difference with the opposite sex," admitted Gareth, offering me a gold-tipped cigarette on the side of which were his initials fantastically engraved in gold, "it is my belief that the role of Peter Pan should never be played by a woman. The portrayal of appealing, lovable youth should essentially be the task of a man. And I am going to run the risk of appearing to be biased by saying that I am very anxious to play that part myself either on the stage or screen."

"The stage," I re-echoed. "You think that you are likely to return to the theatre?"

Gareth lapsed into yet another of his changing moods, and momentarily the mask of eager boyishness fell from his face and he became the inscrutable, serious, professional man of the world with blaseness reflected in his big brown eyes.

"Soon I expect to go back," he admitted. "Arnold Daly has asked me to play Hamlet, and I am anxious to play David Copperfield, Dorian Gray, and Pendennis."

That he is a child of intellect is even more accentuated when Gareth Hughes's finely chiseled features are at rest in his fleeting serious moments. He has the arresting, reflective eyes of the thinker. His high, broad forehead, with its perfect curve from his nose to where his thick brown hair sweeps across his brow, suggests the fertile, creative brain that lies beneath.

His lithe and graceful figure has that broadness of shoulders and slender waist that, in addition to suggesting youth, enables him to wear the most Bohemian dress with distinction. Even in the rags of a tramp in his clever characterisation in 'The Hunter' he had a certain grace of movement and gesture.

Yet Gareth confessed that he seldom indulges in athletics to keep himself fit.

"Keeping fit for me means being able to work unceasingly for sixteen hours at a stretch. I can't do it if I wear myself out completely at sports. I find the mental stimulation of great literature more necessary," he soliloquised.

Before I left Gareth took me around his quaint garden, and showed me the enclosed porch with its silent pool of floating water-lilies where he sits and evolves his new screen characterisations.

It is here that he has read William Shakespeare until he has a surprising knowledge of the works of the famous bard.

To one so highly strung and receptive where the influence of individuals and surroundings is concerned, it is not surprising that Gareth Hughes admits that he is very affected by the "atmosphere" of a scene when he is playing before the cameras.

"The quaint picturesque village of 'Thrums,' which was especially built for the filming of 'Sentimental Tommy,' was a great inspiration to me," Gareth told me. "Somehow, it seemed to have caught the spirit of the story, and to reflect the simple, unaffected outlook of the human Scottish characters figuring in Barrie's book. I felt myself living in the part that I was playing, with the quaint tiled cottages and narrow, twisted streets of Thrums as a background.

"It may sound like idealism," added Gareth, with sudden seriousness in his fine eyes; "but I believe that the great improvement of recent years in the artistic creation of studio sets has helped to uplift the acting of the artistes. It is possible to throw yourself enthusiastically into a part, and enact characters that are not part of one's real personality, if you are acting amidst realistic scenic effects on the production of which any amount of time and labour has been expended.

"I am a devout admirer of those pioneers of the pictures who enthusiastically mimed before crude painted canvas on wooden platforms with only the sun to illuminate the scene. Such conditions must have been very

trying, and they had not the inspiration of lavish scenery and flattering arc-lamps."

Then Gareth betrayed a secret which may to some extent help to explain his puzzling temperament.

"Do you think that I am affected?" he asked, with embarrassing directness, studying my face as he spoke.

I protested politely against any such suggestion.

"I am afraid that I lay myself open to such criticism," went on Gareth, slowly; "for I admit that I go on acting after I have left the studios. It is a theory of mine that an actor should continue to perfect his art by continually pretending to be someone other than his real self.

"For example," he said suddenly, with a characteristic smile playing round his mobile mouth, "at the present moment I confess that I am really worried and a little frightened at being interviewed. I am just trying to act the part of a motion-picture star who is a little bored at having to grant an interview, but is submitting to it only for the benefit of the picturegoers who wish to hear something about him.

"Since you arrived, I have kept saying to myself: 'Gareth, you're an important personage, and people will be hanging on your words.'

"You see," added my youthful host with naive frankness, "I have been convincing myself that it is true for the time being, so that I can talk to you and forget my usual shrinking, timid self.

"I play at being an actor all the time. I am sure that has given me a deeper sympathy with the characters that I have portrayed on the screen. I feel that way over 'Sentimental Tommy' and 'Lester Croke' in 'Garments of Truth'--both character-studies of youngsters who, through force of circumstances, were obliged to act parts outside of themselves."

Gareth Hughes is a remarkably serious young man when he commences to delve beneath the surface of things. Psychology, I discovered, was his favourite study, and it provided considerable recreation for him during the frequent occasions when he went into quiet retirement with his beloved books.

"Books will not teach you a great deal about human nature," Gareth told

me; "you have to study the real thing if you want to reflect on the screen human nature as it really is.

"I spent days and the best part of several nights down in the 'Bowery' quarter of New York not long ago studying the underworld and its human derelicts.

"I was assimilating knowledge for my screen portrayal of the part of the tramp in my film play, 'The Hunter.' Of course, I was not dressed like this," he laughed, indicating his immaculately cut morning suit. "An old-clothes shop provided me with the requisite shabby costume and two weeks' growth of beard completed my disguise.

"I wore the actual clothes in which I masqueraded in 'The Hunter.' That was probably the most economical suit that I have ever appeared in before the cameras."

Gareth Hughes has a peculiar gift for one possessed of an imaginative, creative mind. He has the power to assimilate detail and store it in his brain, despite his vivid mentality which flits from widely diverse subjects with such lack of effort. He suggests the unusual combination of a shrewd business man and an imaginative dreamer.

He talked of his visit of Mexico, to which country he journeyed for the filming of 'Stay Home,' and his vivid descriptions of the South American landscape and wonderful sunsets and clear warm nights were those of an artist, word-painting on a mental canvas. Yet he retained remarkably insignificant details in his mind concerning that visit. He told me how he stole into a Mission Church where Mass was in progress. He described minutely the picturesque costumes of the women worshippers with handkerchiefs on their heads, and he dwelt on the bizarre appearance of the altar boy devoid of vestments, and who was barefooted and attired in a pair of ragged breeches and a torn shirt.

He had found time to study human-beings, as is his custom wherever he goes, although in Mexico he was filming hard all day, and studying the script of a later picture, 'Don't Write Letters,' when away from the studios.

With wistfulness in his brown eyes, Gareth talked of Wales, his native

country, as we sipped tea brought to us by a kindly faced housekeeper who "mothers" her irrepressible master, although it was confided to me that she had only been in his service for a few weeks. For Gareth has the refreshing appeal of youth in his likable personality, and those who have felt the influence of his whimsical, lovable character, which he so effectively radiates from the screen, will understand the feelings of that motherly housekeeper.

Gareth was born in Llanelly, and he has all the typical love of the Welshman for his own country. He is inordinately proud of the fact that Lloyd George came from Wales.

Soon he is going to re-visit the land of his fathers, when his long-delayed vacation becomes a reality.

The practical jokers of the Metro studios revel in circulating rumours that Gareth is getting married. And because, with the wealth that he has amassed from the stage and screen, and his extremely attractive looks, there are always many of the fair sex ready to take an interest in any intriguing matrimonial rumours that are associated with one of the most eligible bachelors in the moving-picture colony.

"It was actually reported that I was honeymooning at the Samarkand Hotel, the hostelry for newly-weds at Santa Barbara, California," Gareth related to me, with a chuckle.

"I happened to be staying there for a few days, and some humourist took the opportunity of pulling off a practical joke.

"My director swallowed it, and wired me for confirmation of the report. I wired back: 'Not honeymooning. Have a fine moon, but no honey.'"

It may be that Gareth has some hidden romance which he has not revealed to the curious world. When he talks of the happiness of an ideal marriage, and confesses that often he is very lonely in his bachelor walk of life, one wonders if somewhere away in the Welsh hills there is a memory which he carries in his heart.

"I would like to be married in Wales if I ever did contemplate matrimony," he confessed, and there was a far-away, reflective expression in

his big brown eyes as he spoke.

When Gareth insisted that I should come with him and inspect the stables adjacent to his picturesque house, where he keeps his mounts, including his first favourite, "Dynamite," who has appeared with him on the screen, I saw another phase of the youthful star's character. He is devoted to horses, and spends much of his spare time in the saddle. But it is the extraordinary understanding that he has of his animals, and the almost affectionate manner in which they press their noses against his delicate hands, that leaves a greater impression than his obvious enthusiasm where horseflesh is concerned.

I left him gazing thoughtfully at the shadowed pool, softly singing the lilting words of a new Broadway foxtrot. Shakespeare and Jazz, cooking and cloisters--I reflected as I made my way back down Gareth's wooded drive. Would anyone ever understand this lovable, human will-o'-the-wisp from the Welsh hills?

James Kirkwood

James Kirkwood directed nine of Mary Miles Minter's films in 1916-17. Although she was only 14 or 15 years old at the time, they had a romantic relationship. According to testimony given by Mary's sister, Kirkwood had seduced and impregnated Mary, resulting in an abortion. The incident undoubtedly contributed to Charlotte Shelby's very protective attitude toward Mary during the subsequent years when Mary was infatuated with Taylor.

* * * * *

November 1915
Pearl Gaddis
MOTION PICTURE

Chats with the Players:
James Kirkwood, of the Famous Players Company

I approached my interview with James Kirkwood in fear and trembling. Perhaps he would be stiff and haughty; perhaps he didn't want to be interviewed at all. And again--most breath-taking "perhaps" of all--perhaps he wasn't in. I must admit that the last "perhaps" carried with it a tiny bit of relief.

The telephone girl at the Seminole Hotel is a very much "down-stage" young person, and when I meekly asked for Mr. Kirkwood, she pushed up her back-hair, smoothed her belt and shifted her gum, the while she looked me over haughtily. I felt absolutely certain she could see that one of my coat-buttons was loose and that I was wearing flowers to hide it. Then she condescended to call a bell-boy.

"Boy," she said languidly, with the air of one who has tasted the joys of life and found them stale, "page Mr. Kirkwood."

I escaped to the reception-room, where I regained my breath. A very tall, very fair-haired man, his lean, strong face sunburned to a hue that deepened the blue of his eyes, came toward me from the elevator.

"Now, tell me what you want me to say," he laughed, "and I'll say it."

"Where were you born, then?" I asked.

"Grand Rapids, Michigan--and was educated there," he returned promptly.

"How long have you been in Motion Pictures?" came next.

"Six years," he said, a light of reminiscence in his pleasant, blue eyes. "Biograph first; then with Universal where I directed King Baggot; then to Famous Players, is my travelog. I directed the first Klaw and Erlanger-Biograph picture ever put on, 'Classmates.' The first Famous Players' picture that I directed was 'The Eagle's Mate,' in which I also played the lead opposite Mary Pickford."

And here I considered it perfectly proper to present a leading question.

"Mr. Kirkwood, do you prefer to direct a person who is experienced and does things his own way, or would you rather take a person who is

inexperienced, but who has talent and who can be molded to your own ways?"

He stared at me for a moment, rather surprised, I think, before replying.

"Well, of course, any director prefers a plastic actor. But it makes no difference to me whether they come to me from the stage with nation-wide reputations, or whether they come from the ranks of 'extras,' as long as they do as I want them to do. Take Mary Pickford, for instance. She placed herself entirely in my hands; and even when she made suggestions that I did not accept, she went right ahead, doing things as I wanted them done. Same way with Miss Dawn, who is playing the lead in my present picture, and with Henry Walthall. There can be but one director in a company."

And since he had mentioned my three favorite actors, I begged for more about them.

"I consider Henry Walthall one of the finest actors in the business today," he resumed. "Of course he isn't perhaps so great a--how shall I say it?--matinee idol as some, but that is because he is not a business man, not a publicity man. He never refuses to play a part because he thinks it might detract from his popularity. Any part that makes him think, that makes him work, delights him, no matter whether it is the part of a deep-dyed villain, a weak, self-willed sort of a person, or a hero. Any one can go on the screen, make a good appearance, do a few heroic things and be acclaimed a hero and an idol. But it takes art to interpret the parts that Henry Walthall does."

"And do you prefer photoplays that deal with exterior, beautiful scenes, to the elaborate, inside stuff that is causing such a furor now?"

"Well, yes, I do. Stories that deal with Nature in her wildest yet most beautiful moods always interest me deeply. There's an inspiration about doing outside production that is utterly lacking under the glare of the 'Cooper-Hewitts' in an inside studio."

"Which would you rather do, act or direct?" I demanded, impertinently, perhaps.

"That's a very difficult question to answer," he mused slowly.

"Of course I like to direct, but I also like to act. I'll tell you what I don't like--both to act and direct. I don't particularly care for that; you can't devote enough time to either one to be absolutely satisfied."

"You have had unlimited experience in both--please tell me do you think motion pictures will ever outshine the stage?"

"Never!" with decision. "They each occupy places so entirely different that they will never clash. Of course, when pictures first came they were considered something of a 'freak,' and people smiled and wondered how long they would last. But slowly they have gained a foothold, and recently have made such rapid strides that your question is quite pertinent. But I think that acting on the stage is an art, like poetry, sculpture and so on, and that it will never give way to pictures. Acting for pictures is just as much an art, but so different that there's never a fear of their clashing, to the detriment of one or the other. It is said sometimes that moving pictures have, by their cheapness, won away from the theater the poorer, uneducated class of people who could not afford the theater. But this is wrong. Everybody goes to moving pictures, and everybody enjoys them.

"I was on the stage," he reminisced, "for ten years before going into pictures, and when I deserted it a number of my friends thought that I was giving up my career. Most of them are members of the Players Club, and are now interested in the very art that they once despised."

I would have liked to have stayed longer, but time was flying and busy directors mustn't be kept from their work. But I must say that James Kirkwood is one of the most interesting men that I have ever had the pleasure of meeting.

* * * * *

June 3, 1916

REEL LIFE

Mutual Engages Famous Producer

James Kirkwood, one of the ablest of photoplay directors, has signed a long-term contract with the American Film Company, Inc. He leaves this week for the American studios at Santa Barbara, Cal., where he will begin the direction of a series of feature photoplays, starring Mary Miles Minter. The contract negotiations were conducted by John R. Freuler, president of the Mutual Film Corporation.

Mr. Kirkwood's experience includes the production of some of the most notable features in the history of photoplay manufacturing in America.

He began directing pictures seven years ago, after a long and successful career on the speaking stage.

Kirkwood went on the stage in his early youth. He appeared in many notable productions, among them with Henry Miller in "The Great Divide," with Blanche Bates in "The Girl of the Golden West," and for his last appearance on Broadway, six years ago, in "The Turning Point," at the Hackett Theatre.

Mr. Kirkwood was kidnapped into the pictures by David Wark Griffith and Harry Solter, when they were working at the old Biograph studios in Fourteenth Street, New York City. Mr. Kirkwood recalled the incident the other day.

"They were making a stupendous one-reel feature," remarked Mr. Kirkwood. "It was entitled 'The Lonely Villa.' The cast included Mary Pickford, Owen Moore, David Miles and Arthur Johnson. I happened into the studio to see a friend working there when Solter spied me and insisted on using me in one scene. He handed me a crowbar and said:

"'Here! Break into this room and rescue the imperiled heroine.'

"I broke through a flock of doors and carried the limp and languishing form of Mary Pickford to safety, with all of the due gallantry of the motion picture hero. That was my introduction to pictures. I didn't give much thought to the incident at the time, but it resulted in my being called as a director with the Biograph Company. Shortly thereafter I was concerned with some of the first of the so-called feature pictures done in America."

As a director for the Biograph, Mr. Kirkwood put out the picture versions of a number of the Klaw and Erlanger productions, principal among

them "Classmates," in which Blanche Sweet, Dorothy Gish, Henry Walthall, Lionel Barrymore and Gertrude Robinson appeared. Mr. Kirkwood also directed "Strongheart," in which Blanche Sweet and Henry Walthall were starred.

Mr. Kirkwood directed ten pictures for the Famous Players, featuring Mary Pickford, and playing important roles in these productions, among them "The Eagle's Mate," "Behind the Scenes," "The Dawn of Tomorrow," and "Rags." He also directed "The Gangsters of New York," a highly successful feature production, made at the Reliance studios and released by the Mutual Film Corporation. As a director for the Reliance Mr. Kirkwood for one year made two one-reel pictures a week, which is something of a record in high pressure direction.

Mr. Kirkwood, as a director, places great emphasis on the importance of the scenario, and he expresses it as his conviction that while the public is tired of stunts, it never will tire of the motion picture's interpretation of real human experience.

He holds the motion picture to be a fundamental form of art expression, with the future as definitely assured as the future of sculpture, painting, music and the drama.

"There seems to be a good deal of talk lately," says Mr. Kirkwood, "concerning the scarcity of motion picture stories and a great deal written about it in the papers. Now, as far as I know they always have been scarce, and to the best of my belief they always will be scarce. Trained writers are now taking up the work of writing photoplays, but even with more of them doing so, good stories will be scarce. Good stories are scarce in magazines, in books and in plays, so why shouldn't they be in motion pictures where they must have all the qualities which make them desirable as stories for type publication and the especial quality for visualization.

"It is said that the flood of books and play adaptations will soon be exhausted, and it cannot be exhausted too soon for me, for I think few of them lend themselves to the screen. When they do they have to stand a lot of manhandling and twisting about by the scenario editors and directors.

"The camera is just as merciless to the inconsistent story as it is to

the human face, betraying its weaknesses as quickly.

"I believe that the most desirable sort of play today is modern and American, either a swift moving drama with strong, human characterizations, or a comedy devoid of extravagance, its incidents growing out of the foibles of human nature, rather than produced by one of the characters smiting another with what is commonly called a slapstick.

"You will have observed, of course, that the sophisticated play fills a large place on the screen nowadays. The audience is supposed to be, and undoubtedly is, fond of evening dress, ballrooms, conservatories and so on. I like that sort of thing, but don't confine myself to it. Virginia, Broadway, Newport or Colorado are good enough for me, if they are supported by virile American drama, or truly original and humorous American comedy. Photoplays are made to be human."

* * * * *

December 1920

Truman B. Handy

MOTION PICTURE CLASSIC

Kirkwood Confesses!

There's an intangible something to James Kirkwood which you simply have to describe as "personality." Not that it is expressed either in a loud voice or a jazz shirt, after the fashion of some of our other screen leading men, but, nevertheless, it's all there.

Kirkwood has come back to the screen after quite a lengthy directorial absence. The traditional grease-paint and handsome-hero stuff is a relief, he says, after the strenuous duties of a megaphone manipulator, and hereafter he's quite satisfied to leave the direction end of the movie game to whatever gentlemen may be disposed to shoulder its burdens.

The solid comfort enjoyed only by that variety of the human species known as motion picture stars--the solid comfort relative to having even the

minutest speck of dust brushed from the coat-tail of one's suit by a fourth-assistant property boy, was being enjoyed by Kirkwood when I cornered him in a brilliantly lighted cubby-hole of a stage at Ince's, where he is working in a Glaum picture.

Kirkwood enjoyed himself ostensibly. Oh, so ostensibly! In fact, as ostensibly as only one who is accustomed to the joys of an actorial existence can possibly enjoy himself. Languidly he held up one arm while "props" with a whiskbroom hacked away at a dust smear. A broad smile o'erspread the Kirkwood countenance.

"Oh," he almost yawned, "I'm so lazy. So darned lazy! Too lazy, even, to doll myself up. And very happy! This is the penalty one pays for being a cinema hero. You mess up and get messed up by the villain and return somewhere off-stage to get renovated. Not that you ever expect 'props' to get off all the grime. That's out of the question. 'Props' is 'props,' and he'll un-spot you enough so that the dear fans won't think you are sporting sartorial novelties."

"This leading-man life has the directorial existence skinned a mile?" I again ventured.

"You said it! No more directing for me!"

Kirkwood, a few years back, was one of the coterie of popular matinee favorites--when he played opposite Mary Pickford in "Behind the Scenes." Just at the zenith of his popularity he gave his admirers a heartache by leaving them flat to direct. For a long time we heard nothing of him, further than that he would produce this picture or that, until Allan Dwan lured him back to the grease-paint in "The Luck of the Irish."

In the picture he played a whole-hearted, manly young Irishman. Kirkwood, being both manly and whole-hearted, made the characterization a page from the book of Life. He had a fight or two every twenty-five feet, and by the time that the picture was half over, you commenced to wonder whether God and human vitality would pull him through.

Fighting is one of his pastimes de luxe. Back in the old Biograph days he used to astonish them all by his ability in a screen free-for-all, and now

that he's staged a regular film "come-back," they still continue to cast him as the chief purveyor of this black-and-blue drama.

"I've had something like four hundred brawls before the camera," he remarked, "and I've never put anybody permanently out of commission. Screen fighting's a fine art. You have to hit your opponent so you won't crack either his make-up or his jaw."

Kirkwood, both in his make-up and off-stage, is not the type of the matinee man. His hair is naturally curly--not marcelled. His teeth are all his own, and he has enough muscle to beat up a cop should he want to. Furthermore, when you're talking to him, he seems to forget that James Kirkwood is alive. He never mentions himself, and it is only with the utmost difficulty that he is made to say anything at all about his work.

And, girls, he's just a wee bit bashful! In fact, he blushed--visibly, even under his make-up--when someone asked him if he'd ever been proposed to. Of course, he has; what good-looking screen actor hasn't?

But it's nothing to brag about, he adds. Rather, it's an honor to be proud of, and he wishes it made known that he would like to oblige each of the fairest fair ones, only--

That "only" is a definite reason, which it is not my province to disclose. Suffice it to say that James, being a dutiful son, supports his mother.

Kirkwood insists that he likes to do either dramatic or comedy parts.

To his great credit his versatility enables him to do one as well as the other.

"What are you best in?" I asked.

"Why ask me?" he rejoins. "Why ask any actor? How does he know what he's best suited for?"

Once, when he was very young, a stage manager had him don crepe whiskers and play old men in their seventies. Later, he did foreign character parts. It used to be his ambition to be a heavy.

There's something about the expression of his eyes that made me think that, perhaps, he might be a good he-vamp. Whereupon I broach the subject

and--am at once squelched.

"He vamp?" he snorted. "Nothing doing!"

Some day, when he has amassed a neat little bank account from the silent drama, Kirkwood is going to "settle down" on a comfortable farm. Now, he says, he gets tired of the sophistication of the stage, exactly as a banker wearies of the humdrum existence of the clearing house. It's reversing the English on your own life, as it were; everybody gets bored doing his own particular line of work--or, rather, tires of his world.

Kirkwood literally got dragged onto the screen. Griffith, working at the Biograph in New York, saw him one day when he visited some friends at the studio and prevailed upon him to accept a part. Previously he had been with Blanche Bates on the stage under Belasco's management in "The Girl of the Golden West," with Henry Miller and Margaret Anglin in "The Great Divide" and with other stars of the legitimate, and was playing the male lead in the stage version of "Behind the Scenes" when he strolled into the studio.

When he made his screen debut, the majority of the now-known "pioneers" were "extras" at the studio, making five dollars a day. He started in a picture with Marion Leonard and Mary Pickford--went on before the camera for the first time in a "retake." After playing every variety of part in one- and two-reelers, he was at length given Marion Leonard to direct, and subsequently, after careers with Reliance, Mutual, Universal, Fox and American, he affiliated with Famous Players, first as a leading man, later as a director, where he swayed the destinies of such stars as Jack Barrymore in "The Lost Bridegroom"; Hazel Dawn in a number of plays, and Florence Reed in a series, among which was "The Struggle Everlasting."

Shortly afterward, when Jack Pickford began to make pictures for First National, Kirkwood became his director. He wrote "In Wrong" for Mary's little brother and directed him in it. Later, he held the megaphone for "Bill Apperson's Boy."

It was then Allen Dwan came along, and Jim joined him, later going to play opposite Louise Glaum in "The Girl Who Dared"; and now Kirkwood will permanently remain in his make-up, because, in the final analysis, he likes

to think that there is a bigger field in acting.

"But," I concluded, "I thought I heard you say you're lazy."

"Oh, yes," he responded. "I guess I am. But I couldn't go without working--not if somebody offered me a cool million to take life easy--exactly as I like to take it."

* * * * *

April 1921

Aline Carter

MOTION PICTURE CLASSIC

The Kirkwood "Come-Back"

James Kirkwood has reversed the usual order of things for, after attaining the megaphone and distinguishing himself as a director of merit, he has returned to his first love--acting. Probably he is still in an active stage of development, for he is displaying a remarkable versatility that makes him an interesting figure in the motion picture world.

Between scenes at the Lasky studio in Hollywood, where Mr. Kirkwood is creating the principal role in George Melford's big production, "The Money Master," based on Sir Gilbert Parker's well-known novel, we talked of his past and present, and speculated on his future career.

He has a charming personality, genuine and sincere, but uncomfortably modest for, though he talks freely on many subjects, he is most reticent about James Kirkwood, and it required much maneuvering to fulfill the demands of an interview.

His voice is particularly well modulated, pitched very low and he speaks slowly. In fact, he never seems hurried or rushed and, in this day of frantic haste, this quality sets him apart as rather unusual.

Besides this, Mr. Kirkwood possesses many physical characteristics that particularly fit him for the handsome hero roles that have been his forte since returning to the screen as an actor. A tall, well-knit body and

splendid physique show him to be an athlete, and he gives one the feeling of a tremendous reserve force and an unquenchable vitality. His brown hair has a natural curl that is the envy of every ingenue about the studios, while the merry twinkle in his blue eyes wins admirers at every turn.

For his role of the stern French Canadian, Jean Jacques Barbille, he wears a short velvet coat, corduroy trousers and heavy service shoes, with a crowning camouflage consisting of a full beard which he annexes with the aid of a spry young barber who hastens to pat and smooth this work of art before each scene.

"I only hope this make-up doesn't start an avalanche of bearded roles," laughed Mr. Kirkwood. "After I finished 'The Luck of the Irish,' every director who had an Irish part saw me in it and one producer even wanted me to do a series of Irish pictures. Nothing doing. I do not want to confine myself to one character nor establish a screen personality that I would be forced to live up to. I enjoy portraying various roles too much for that. It's like knowing many different people, and just as you may like some of your acquaintances better than others, so do you prefer some of your screen characters to others.

"I do not care what the part is, so long as it offers a character delineation that is real," he continued, in his slow, deliberate tones. "You can play a role that is absolutely despicable yet appreciate and often admire it, if it is strong and runs true to type. I am always fascinated with each new role, but you know the old saying about the latest love being the greatest. Well, that's the way I feel about this role of Jean Jacques. It's a corker and the most interesting I have had, offering an opportunity for strong acting. That is what we are always hoping for, a part that will sweep us off our feet and, incidentally, the audience as well, and in which we excel all our previous efforts."

"Ready, Mr. Kirkwood!" sang out a voice, and taking a final survey of the precious whiskers in a small mirror held before him by his faithful Japanese valet, he began rehearsing a dramatic scene in which he does a remarkable bit of sustained acting while alone on the set. With

Mr. Melford's quiet command, "Camera," a definite sense of tenseness gripped us all as we watched the tragedy of Jean's broken heart revealed to the camera while the plaintive sob of the violins playing, "Land of the Sky-Blue Water," supplied an appropriate accompaniment.

With the final click everyone relaxed and the vivid Elinor Glyn, swathed in a gorgeous fur coat, suggestive of the tiger skin she made famous, left us for the next set where a society tea was being staged for Cecil deMille's all star picture, "Five Kisses."

Mr. Kirkwood says that directing has developed and broadened his viewpoint and all the conceit was knocked out of him when he once more began to act.

"I recall how I used to wonder why on earth an actor couldn't play a role as he knew it should be played," he confessed. "That's the rub, that's what we are all trying to learn, but believe me, it isn't as easy as it often appears to the director. Just as I would prescribe a period of acting for every director, so would I have actors learn the directing angle as a means of enlarging their own comprehension of the requirements.

Jimmy Kirkwood was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His dramatic career presents a remarkable record of constancy, for from the moment he made up his mind to become an actor he never wavered. This determination came while he was still a small boy and was the result of seeing Modjeska and Booth in a series of Shakespearian dramas, the memory of which still thrills him.

From this time on he studied, worked and dreamed to this end and though he knew no one connected with the theater in any way, he celebrated his twentieth birthday by setting forth for New York to make his fortune on the stage.

His father had planned that he should go to West Point, but pushing aside his desires he loyally stood by his son in his stage dreams, probably believing they would prove but a passing fancy.

His first experience was in repertoire at eight dollars a week, but slowly, step by step, he forged his way ahead and the last four years of his stage life were spent with those two greatest dramatic directors, Henry

Miller and David Belasco, to whose influence, he declares, he owes much.

His screen career began at the old Biograph studio, where he became one of that now famous group of film stars. When Griffith came to Los Angeles seven years ago, Mr. Kirkwood came along as his director and his experiences included directing for Reliance, Universal, Fox and Famous Players. After the armistice, he swayed the destiny of Jack Pickford through his four pictures for First National, and it was while at work on these that Allan Dwan induced him to don the grease paint once again and play the leading role of the production, "The Luck of the Irish."

"I enjoyed every foot of that picture," and Mr. Kirkwood became quietly enthusiastic. "Believe me, we staged some hot fights in it and it seems like old times, for fights were my specialty in those first days when action was the main thing."

Following this, he played opposite Louise Glaum in "The Girl Who Dared," going back to Dwan for "The Scoffers." The made "The Forbidden Thing," "Man, Woman, Marriage," with Dorothy Phillips, and played the star role in Micky Neilan's latest production, "Bob Hampton of Placer."

No more directing for him, declares Mr. Kirkwood. He believes the acting game offers him a greater opportunity, and, too, he loves it. Some day he wants to return to the stage with a "whopper of a role," but he is loyal to motion pictures and thinks they are a powerful influence in the right direction. He believes that film stories should deal with life as it really is, while lending romance and beauty to the commonplace and bringing out the lesson that an inexorable law demands payment for all wrong, even to the last farthing, and the only happiness comes in doing right.

Mr. Kirkwood keeps house and, being a bachelor, has to depend on Japanese servants to steer the domestic bark. He is busy writing a script for himself, a morbid sort of thing dealing with heredity and spiritualism, though he makes the concession of a happy ending for the two lovers. He says he is having a beautiful time writing and tearing up his manuscript, so there is really no telling into what it will evolve.

"It's a modest effort," he grinned, cheerfully. "I only play three

roles and, of course, the best ones."

His pleasures consist of attending the theater and seeing all the pictures as they are released, for he admits he is an ardent "movie" fan. He is fond of reading, Shakespeare and Dickens being his favorite authors, and he loves music.

Every summer he leases a cottage at Ocean Park, where he takes his swim and a run to the beach each morning before going to the studio. Of course, he rides, dances, plays golf and tennis, and he dreams of some day owning a cattle ranch with horses, dogs and cats!

The most characteristic remark James Kirkwood made during our entire chat came in answer to my question as to his future ambitions. Promptly and without affectation he replied: "I am trying to learn to act. When I do that I shall feel I have reached my highest goal."

* * * * *

October 1921
Kenneth Curley
MOTION PICTURE

With Measured Tread

In the sonorous deliberation of James Kirkwood's voice lies the key to the whole man. Its deep resonance is measured, slow, like the tone of a great bell. It is mellow and smooth, with not a harsh note. And when one, once accustomed to it, begins to notice James Kirkwood himself, there is in his every move, the slow gesture of a hand, the turn of his head, the same rhythmical purpose. It is not calculation. Of that I am sure. The man seems quite without pose or pretense. It is merely an innate quality of his. One likes him immediately.

After playing for some time with Allan Dwan, and later with Marshall Neilan, he is now with Lasky. It was there, at the Hollywood studio, that I talked with him, up in his cement dressing-room.

He was dressed immaculately in evening clothes. I was surprised by the light blue of his eyes, a steady, penetrating blue blue that, but for the warmth of his smile, might be termed cold. He stood, I imagined, over six feet. He appeared somewhat younger than on the screen, slenderer.

He had made no attempt to lighten the white gloom of the dressing-room, into which he had just moved. There were only the two chairs and the dressing-table. Upon it, amongst the litter of make-up materials, lay three boxes of cigarettes, all of different brands. He helped himself to them alternately as the interview progressed, as though with them he was measuring off its advance.

We talked of the weather, of course. Everyone does in California when it rains. They say apologetically, "How unusual!" James Kirkwood refused apology and instead assured me earnestly, challengingly, that it WAS unusual. I, recalling the three weeks of chilly, unremitting rain, agreed politely--and doubtfully.

James Kirkwood is to be a star. Only a week or two lay between him and the hour when he would sign his name on the dotted line, with Mr. Lasky at his shoulder, nodding approval.

"But I have told them," he said slowly, "that I will not sign unless it is understood that I am not to be starred in program pictures only. They are deadly. No one is big enough to carry a season of them. Unless I am to have an occasional big production I shall not sign."

He flicked his cigarette.

"A good deal depends upon the way my last feature picture, 'A Wise Fool,' goes with the public. They think here on the lot that it is a great production, but I'll not be satisfied until the public returns its verdict."

He blew a thoughtful cloud of smoke toward the ceiling.

"There are several other things--tempting offers--that I should like to consider but," he set one leg slowly across the other, "I have seen so many independent producers go under! I am almost persuaded that a big organization behind one is the better policy."

He helped himself from the largest of the three boxes of cigarettes.

"I would like," he went on, having got the cigarette going comfortably, "I would like to do 'Othello' for the screen, playing both characters, Othello and Iago. There is very little conflict between the two. I don't want to do it just for the questionable glory of playing two roles. These two are so different in themselves, both such appealing parts to me in a character sense, that I merely want to do them for what there is in each of them."

We talked so, seriously, throughout the hour. There was little of humor or sparkle apparent in him. I would have gone to my typewriter picturing him as a pleasant, rather heavy gentleman, had I not encountered Tom Gallery that evening. He, in his enthusiasm, painted quite a different portrait.

"Kirkwood's fifty-fifty!" is the way he put it. "People think often that he's very silent and reserved. He is, I suppose on first acquaintance--and when he first gets up in the morning. He'll come to the studio, sleepy and quiet, and walk around with his hands in his pockets, speaking to no one. And then something 'll hit you an awful crack on the back and let loose a terrific yell in your ears. It's Kirkwood! He's just wakened up! He's one of the best scouts in the game."

It was Tom, too--he played with him in a Neilan production--who told me that while he was a director, Kirkwood had given Micky Neilan his first chance in pictures.

"Sure," said Tom. "Somebody, a friend of Kirkwood's, sent Neilan to him with a letter which read, 'This kid seems to have promise. Give him a chance.' Kirkwood put him in a small part and let it go at that. But Neilan didn't. He kept rushing back after every scene with a 'Say, Mr. Kirkwood, why don't you make this scene this way?' or 'This would be a great idea to use in this scene, Mr. Kirkwood.' It ended when Kirkwood, bellowing his rage, told him to get out. 'If you think you know so much about it,' he said, 'go home and write a story.' The next day Neilan was back with his story. Later, Kirkwood put it on. Oh, he's fifty-fifty."

It is interesting that, after James Kirkwood made his unusual step from directing back to acting, Marshall Neilan, by that time an independent

producer, used him in his picture, "Bob Hampton of Placer." Kirkwood explained his return to make-up in a few words:

"I always wanted to act," he said. "I was really forced into directing by circumstances. And things didn't go particularly well. When the chance came to go with Allan Dwan as leading man, I went. I've been acting ever since."

We discussed the various productions of the year, the German pictures, "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," and one or two others.

"I don't know," said Kirkwood deliberately, "but I should rank 'The Four Horsemen' as the greatest picture that has ever been made."

Isn't that a rather big statement?" I suggested.

"Yes, it is. I have read several extremely adverse criticisms. I recall that Herbert Howe in particular was denunciatory. But in spite of him and of others, and of my first doubt, I think I'll let the statement stand. I think the picture was much better than the book."

I didn't carry the argument further. There were several anticipations that I wanted to discuss.

That he has confidence in the permanency of his work here in California is evidenced by the fact that he has taken a house for a year down on the Pacific, on the beach between Venice and Playa Del Rey, one of the rare stretches where the odor of hot dogs is not in the air and the landscapes are not cluttered with piers.

In the undeniable strength of the man, his unconsciously studied movements, his poise and quiet assurance, one realizes a personality that will probably grace the screen for many seasons. And, if it be possible, each year will find his skill on the increase, his art more mellowed. He is the sort of man who constantly strives--and inevitably achieves. He will progress deliberately, surely--with measured tread.

* * * * *

October 29, 1922

Louella Parsons
NEW YORK TELEGRAPH

While still under the spell of "The Fool," I met James Kirkwood. I saw not the movie hero of a hundred film thrillers, but the earnest young assistant rector who tried to live according to the teachings of Christ and almost landed himself in the insane asylum. I had heard much about "The Fool" before it ever reached Broadway. But Helen Pollock's enthusiasm over her father's finest play seemed mild after seeing with my own eyes the result of Channing Pollock's thoughtful work. "The Fool" is the sort of play that is written once in a generation. It lifts you right out of your every-day humdrum existence and inspires you to try and bring a little more love and charity into your dealings with your fellow men.

James Kirkwood in his characterization of Gilchrist presents this message of life and truth, which is better than any sermon I ever heard. It seemed when first I met Mr. Kirkwood in his dressing room at the theatre that he belonged in a totally different atmosphere. That is what the play did to me. It did the same for him, for he admits that he comes more and more under the spell of Gilchrist at each performance.

Mr. Kirkwood has been identified with motion pictures for so long that his success in "The Fool" is in a way a motion picture triumph. He as well as his friends were dubious as to his reception in a serious play. The attitude of people being "once a movie hero--always a movie hero." But strangely enough this wasn't held against Mr. Kirkwood. In fact his motion picture career wasn't as much as mentioned.

Suffering with a heavy cold, Mr. Kirkwood was doing his best to nurse his voice so he wouldn't fail Channing Pollock.

"Yesterday, before the opening," said Mr. Kirkwood, "I wouldn't have cared if I had lost my voice. I was so frightened I thought an automobile that almost bore me down would have done a great favor to Mr. Pollock if it had struck me. I was hungry, but I couldn't eat. I ordered dinner, but I didn't touch a mouthful. I was in a sort of a daze, a stupor, all day. Mr. Pollock had been so fine I didn't want to disappoint him and coming back

to the stage after an absence of ten years takes Herculean courage, but today I feel better. I shouldn't want an automobile to run me down."

Mr. Kirkwood's return to the stage is the result of serious thought. First as a director of Mary Pickford and other famous stars he earned an enormous salary and then later as leading man in many of the big pictures of the year he increased that weekly envelope until at the time he accepted a part in "The Fool" he was making enough to be classed with the rich people in the industry.

"I had several offers from stage producers," said Mr. Kirkwood, "but nothing that appealed to me. It seemed the essence of foolishness to give up my remunerative motion picture work for a stage part that did not promise either reward in money or fame. One producer wanted to sign me up with the promise that he would find something for me. His idea was to send me out to all the small towns and bank on my popularity on the screen, not caring what sort of a play I had. Naturally such an offer did not appeal to me and I had practically given up all thought of the stage until Mr. Pollock asked me to read "The Fool." After reading it there wasn't money enough in all the world to tempt me to give up the chance to play Gilchrist. The stage, of course, doesn't pay what the screen does, but do you know honestly money never enters my head. I'm in love with my part and I believe I would have played in 'The Fool' if I hadn't received one penny. It's the finest role I ever had."

Gilchrist is to James Kirkwood, from his own conversation, what Hawthorne's "Great Stone Face" was to the boy who unconsciously grew like it, as he gazed at its image day after day.

"I am not religious," he said, "at least not according to the popular idea of it. But it's a funny thing, this play gives something to every one. It inspires even those who never give a thought to the desire to be better or to improve themselves. It makes one think what a small thing money is and how great is character, and the opportunity to help other people--and how simple it all is if we only make the effort.

"I talk about what it does to me," he went on. "I really do not count. It is the effect it has on the people who see it. A priest came to

Mr. Pollock on the opening night and said: 'That play is too good for the theatre. It should be played in the church.' Mr. Pollock thanked him and said it was much better to have it played in the theatre because then it reached more people who probably needed it. Another priest wired Mr. Pollock and said: 'God bless you for having written such a play.'"

A curious thing about James Kirkwood. He simply refused to talk about himself. His whole conversation was Channing Pollock and "The Fool."

"Do you know," he asked me, "that it took Mr. Pollock ten years to write this play? He never expected it would be a success. He wrote it because he had it in his heart. One of the critics said he wrote what he feared might be over the heads of the people, and instead wrote right into their hearts."

While we were talking one of the members of the cast came and whispered something in Mr. Kirkwood's ear:

"Tell her to wait," he said.

But I noticed he said the word wait very reluctantly. Could you blame him--when it was Lila Lee? Miss Lee and Seena Owen occupied front seats at the opening performance. The motion picture people with whom "our Jim" is very popular feel a personal interest in this marvelous triumph scored by him and by "The Fool." They cannot help but feel a certain pride in having one of their clan associated with a play that brings so much mentally, morally and spiritually to those who see it.

And because the whole company was waiting for rehearsal and Miss Lee was beginning to show signs of impatience our interview ended. After seeing Mr. Gilchrist on the stage I was a little afraid to meet him face to face. But he measures up to the character. His greatest charm is his simplicity and sincerity and he will spread the gospel of better living quite as effectively and perhaps more interestingly and more dramatically than any delivered from the pulpit.

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WILLIAM DESMOND TAYLOR: A DOSSIER (Scarecrow Press, 1991)

* T A Y L O R O L O G Y *
* A Continuing Exploration of the Life and Death of William Desmond Taylor *
* *
* Issue 90 -- June 2000 Editor: Bruce Long *
* TAYLOROLOGY may be freely distributed *

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What is TAYLOROLOGY?

TAYLOROLOGY is a newsletter focusing on the life and death of William Desmond Taylor, a top Paramount film director in early Hollywood who was shot to death on February 1, 1922. His unsolved murder was one of Hollywood's major scandals. This newsletter will deal with: (a) The facts of Taylor's life; (b) The facts and rumors of Taylor's murder; (c) The impact of the Taylor murder on Hollywood and the nation; (d) Taylor's associates and the Hollywood silent film industry in which Taylor worked. Primary emphasis will be given toward reprinting, referencing and analyzing source material, and sifting it for accuracy.

The April 27, 2000 issue of the Springfield ILLINOIS TIMES had a feature article "Queen of the Cliffhangers," on the life and career of Neva Gerber, including her involvement with William Desmond Taylor. (Thanks to Cheryl Thomas for bring the article to our attention.)

Taylor the Actor: Vitagraph Film Plots

The following are plot summaries of most of William Desmond Taylor's films made for Vitagraph in 1913-14, as originally published in VITAGRAPH LIFE PORTRAYALS.

* * * * *

The Secret of the Bulb

[Taylor's role: "Jack, her Son"]

Disapproving of her son's affection for Miss Martin, the nurse, Mrs. Richards loses no opportunity to tell her son, Jack, what she thinks of it. Miss Martin receives a letter from her brother, asking for money to get him out of a scrape. She puts the letter in a book she is reading. Not long afterwards, Mrs. Martin misses a ring which her little daughter Nellie has mischievously taken and lost. The ring accidentally slips from her finger while she is digging her hand in the dirt, of a flower pot. Mrs. Richards, while looking for the ring, knocks the book which Miss Martin was reading off the table and finds the letter from the nurse's brother. She puts two and two together and comes to the conclusion that Miss Martin took the ring to raise funds for her brother. She calls the girl and dismisses her on the spot without even giving her a chance to defend herself. Miss Martin goes back to nursing at the big hospital.

Later, when the bulb which was placed in the flower-pot in which little Nellie was digging, sends out its shoots, it carries the hidden ring to the surface, and when Mrs. Richards goes through the conservatory on a tour of inspection she discovers it. Nellie happens to run by at the time and from her guilty look it is easily seen that she is responsible for the ring being in the pot. Mrs. Richards is very sorry now for what she has done and she tells her son. He upbraids her for her injustice and tells her he will not

speak to her again until Miss Martin has been found and exonerated. He goes to a detective agency to start a search for the girl and while there is wounded by the accidental discharge of a revolver.

He is taken to the hospital. His mother comes to see him but he will not speak to her. His mother leaves him and while on her way out meets Miss Martin. She finally prevails upon her to go in to see Jack. A happy reunion follows in which the two lovers are reunited and a mother is forgiven

* * * * *

The Brute

[Taylor's role: "The Stranger, Man from Mary's Home Town"]

Because he is a drunkard, Black Barton is despised by his friends and hated by his family. He hates them in turn because they do not understand that he fights against drink until nearly insane. Ted, his son, loves him but fears him and shrinks when he is near. The father loves his son and wants to be good to him but is filled with brutal rage when the boy shrinks from him.

Barton goes to a saloon and drinks all day. A man whom Barton's wife had known in her girlhood days comes to see her. She is excited and pleased to see him. The children like him and he is much taken with them. A neighbor on the way to the saloon sees the wife and her friend, and when he reaches the saloon he tells Black Barton, who at once starts home with the intent to kill the stranger. He comes to the home and looks in the window. He sees his wife laughing happily with the man, and the children playing. He enters the house and the look of misery comes back to the wife's face and the children cower in fear. Barton realizes that without him his family has a chance of happiness. He turns abruptly and goes from the house. His son follows and tries to call him back but to no purpose. Arriving at the summit of a great precipice, he stands a moment with his face turned towards the heavens then plunges over the cliff and goes bounding down the rocky side to

his death, hundreds of feet below. His body is found later by a party of prospectors. They realize as they look that "The Brute" had some redeeming trait in his nature after all.

* * * * *

The Love of Tokiwa

[Taylor's role: "Richard Davis"; Margaret Gibson's role: Tokiwa]

When Yoshisada speaks to cruel Kajiware, the wealthy Japanese fisherman, for the hand of his daughter Tokiwa, he is not graciously received. This does not bring tears to the wondrous, almond-shaped eyes of Tokiwa; she does not like Yoshisada. Neither is she fond of her father, who beats her and makes her work very hard. She has a friend in Anna Lang, who has a missionary school in the village, and in Richard Davis, who comes to the town to deal with Kajiware concerning the village catch. Davis loves Anna; they are engaged to be married. They decide that they will take the little Jap [sic] girl away with them to the city. Tokiwa has fallen in love with Davis and mistakes his kindness for love. He tells her that he will take her away to a place where she will be very happy. His words are overheard by Yoshisada, who swears that it will never happen.

Yoshisada tells Tokiwa's father of the American's words and together they plan a hurried wedding. The girl is literally sold to Yoshisada, that her services may not go to someone other than her father. Poor Tokiwa is in despair when she learns of the plans for her future.

A telegram comes to Anna, saying that the American, who has been away, is coming back. Tokiwa borrows the telegram, having learned now how to read at the mission school. Her father sees the message. He tells Yoshisada, who vows that the American shall not reach the village alive. Tokiwa sends up a white dove which Davis had given her, with a prayer to save him. Yoshisada waylays Davis, and as he is passing in his car on a road hundreds of feet below the cliff, he rolls a huge boulder down upon him and believes he has

killed him. Yoshisada loses his life at this place later, by falling over the cliff.

Tokiwa dressed all in white and with wreaths of flowers about her, enters her boat and goes out alone in the sunset of the sea to find the heaven of the Americans. Later, when Anna and Davis and the villagers come to the beach to find her, they see an upturned boat drifting out on the silent waves.

* * * * *

How God Came to Sonny Boy

[Taylor's role: "Rober Vibrat, A Poor Artist"]

Struggling to earn a living, Roger Vibrat, an artist, receives an order to paint an enlargement of a portrait, the money to be paid on delivery of the picture. He has no canvas the required size and no money to buy one. He tries in vain to get credit; no one will lend money to a poor artist.

It is the day before Christmas. Sonny Boy, his little child, while showing pictures in a book to his mother, who is ill in bed, comes across a Sunday School card with the text: "I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you." His mother explains to him the meaning of the text. When his father returns home, downcast, Sonny shows him the card and pointing to the words with his little finger, tells him that they are true. Roger braces up. He goes out and pawns his overcoat. He buys an old canvas on which to paint the picture. While cleaning the canvas, he discovers the signature of a famous artist on it. Wild with excitement, he cleans the canvas and shows it to a dealer, who gives him one thousand dollars for it.

Roger buys food, toys and flowers for his little family; and when he returns home with his arms laden down with gifts, Sonny, wild with joy, runs up to him and says, "I knew God would come."

* * * * *

Tainted Money

[Taylor's role: "Jack Forsythe"]

Greed prevents John Bennett, a wealthy financier, from giving any thought to the misery he causes among the poor people who are affected by his stock manipulations, with wheat, which raises the price of bread beyond the reach of the masses. His beautiful daughter, Constance, shares his delight in his financial success. By accident, she learns that her father's gain is the ruin of an old chum of hers, Jack Forsythe. She begins to see the harm that has been wrought. A settlement worker, David Spencer, realizes that Bennett is responsible for the pitiable condition of the people, having closed down his factory rather than accede to the workers' demand for more pay. David enters the Bennett home and forces Bennett to accompany him to the homes of the people who are suffering. Constance, his daughter, prevails upon him to be lenient with Jack Forsythe, getting there with the good tidings just in time to learn that Jack's mother has succumbed from the shock of her son's ruin. Bennett slowly begins to realize that his idea is wrong; that he really is to blame for the suffering of others.

While walking to his works one morning, Bennett is set up by the mob and has to be rescued by David. He now pledges himself to help alleviate the suffering he has caused. Its latest form is an epidemic of typhoid. Unknown to the people, and using David as his lieutenant, he succeeds with the help of his daughter in relieving much of the suffering. When, six weeks later, the suffering is over, the people come and demand to meet their benefactor. When Bennett steps out on his veranda, they rail and shout at him angrily, until David explains that it is he who has helped them. Bennett then announces the engagement of David and his daughter, who have fall in in love during their work together in the slums, and states that he resigns his place to the young man, whom he considers the most worthy successor he could possibly choose. The crowd cheers him to the echo.

* * * * *

The Master of the Mine

[Taylor's role: "Arthur Berkow"]

Having lost his wealth, James Arnold, an aged aristocrat, applies to Philip Berkow, a wealthy mine owner, of the middle class socially, for a loan. Berkow proposes that they make a matrimonial alliance between Arnold's daughter Eugenie and Berkow's son Arthur, one having the wealth and the other the social prestige. Anxious to maintain her own social standing, Eugenie reluctantly agrees, while Arthur, who loves the girl, also consents.

The miners are on the point of an uprising in protest against certain conditions at the mine. They hold up the bridal party, but are dispersed by Hartmann, who is against violence. The wedding guests gather for the banquet, the elder Berkow lifts his glass to drink to the health of the bride, and falls dead of heart failure.

A delegation of miners, headed by Hartmann, call upon Arthur and insist upon their demands. Arthur defies them. Meanwhile, Eugenie's father has received an unexpected legacy and persuades Eugenie to leave her husband. She goes to his office and sees the situation between the husband and the angry miners, which brings to her her first realization of real respect for Arthur's manliness. She tells him of her intention of leaving him. He listens to her calmly and tells her she can go.

The miners plan to blow up the mine. They place the powder and are about to return when part of the tunnel caves in. Arthur rushes to the mine and goes down the shaft to rescue the men. He saves them all, but he is entrapped. Eugenie pleads for them to rescue her husband; all refuse. She starts down alone. Hartmann springs into the bucket with her. They find Arthur and bring him safely up, amid the cheers of the crowd. The explosion comes, as Eugenie and Arthur stand apart, and, looking into each other's eyes, realize that their love is mutual.

* * * * *

Millions for Defence

[Taylor's role: "Bob"]

Young, pretty and flirtatious, "Billie" is spoiled by too much attention. She refuses Arthur when he proposes, and later boasts to her girl friends she can make any man propose. Arthur's chum, Bob Clinton, is a millionaire, and, according to a newspaper article, a confirmed bachelor. The girls see this, and "Billie" immediately determines to make Bob propose. She sends Bob her picture and a declaration of war, reading, "I have decided to marry you!" Angry and worried, he replies, "Millions for defence, but not one cent for trIBUTE." He then orders the butler, who is smitten with her picture, not to admit "Billie," should she call.

Billie goes to see Bob and talking sweetly to the butler, walks right by him into Bob's presence. He is greatly surprised and becomes rather frightened. Rushing outside, he calls up a detective agency and and manager sends a score or more plain clothes men for his protection. "Billie" says, "Shame, calling detectives!" and goes out promising to call again. On her next visit she is unable to get in the house. She intercepts a telegram to Bob from his mother, gets an idea, and again visits Bob, disguised as his mother. She gets in all right and Bob is horrified when he discovers the deception. He calls up Arthur, requesting him to come at once, to take Billie away and marry her. Arthur arrives, adopts a butler's disguise and on "Billie's" next call, stops her and tries to kiss her. She slaps his face and runs out, but comes back later. After a chase, Bob has just succeeded in locking her in a side room, when his mother drops in. After many exciting and anxious moments, Bob decides to have it over with, and going into the room, proposes to "Billie," who turns him down. As they come out, Billie's father, who has learned of the incident, enters. In order to explain the situation, "Billie" and Bob pretend to be engaged. Their parents are surprised, but offer congratulations and depart. Finding they really love

each other, Bob, after a genuine proposal of marriage, tenderly clasps her in his arms.

* * * * *

The Kiss

[Taylor's role: "George, Society Man"; Margaret Gibson's role: "Alice, A Shop Girl"]

Contented and happy, Alice, a little shop girl, smiles with satisfaction as she looks at her little clay bank containing her savings. Fred, the floorwalker in Berkley's story where Alice works, is sincerely in love with her.

George Dale, a wealthy young society man, takes his fiance, Helen Bradley, out riding. Their car is stalled and in fixing it, his necktie becomes spattered with oil. He stops in at Berkley's to buy another. Mazie, a flashily-dressed girl at the counter next to Alice's, waits on him. George starts a flirtation with her. Alice overhears them and the poison of discontent and envy creeps into her mind. She decides that the attentions Mazie receives is owing to her pretty clothes. She determines to purchase some and that night breaks open her little clay bank.

Fred expresses strong disapproval of Alice's new finery. When George comes in the story again, he is struck with her appearance, and ignoring Mazie, invites Alice out to dinner.

Alice and George meet his fiance and Betty, her friend. George introduces Alice as his cousin. Helen impulsively kisses her on the cheek. Alice has an awakening and her conscience begins to trouble her. Later, when George tries to kiss her on the cheek in a restaurant, she springs up, saying, "No! No! That is where SHE kissed me because she loved YOU!" Hurrying home, she casts off her now repugnant finery and returns to her more modest attire. Repentent, George tells Helen the truth and his sincerity wins her forgiveness.

Next day, the landlady's little child gives Alice a kiss on the same cheek that Helen had kissed, while Fred, happy that she has gone back to the simple things of life, steals up and adds his kiss to the others. Alice is happy and realizes that contentment is the foundation stone of happiness.

* * * * *

A Little Madonna

[Taylor's role: "Paul Langrois, An Artist"; Margaret Gibson's role: "Marie"]

Terrorized by Guido, her drunken and brutal father, Marie receives assurance from her dying mother that the Madonna will always protect her. The father reels in just after the mother has expired, too drunk to realize the woman is dead, and finding the whiskey bottle empty, abuses the child. Marie appeals to the image of the Madonna and Guido, in a frenzy of rage, smashes it on the floor. Horrified at the sacrilege, Marie screams, bringing in the neighbors, among them Paul Langrois, a young artist and curio-lover. Paul's sympathy is aroused and he adopts the child. Later, Marie's father, who is ignorant of her whereabouts, sees Paul purchase an expensive silver image of the Madonna. He determines to steal the statue and follows Paul home, planning to return that night and get it.

The little statue is put in a prominent place by the worshipful Marie. Paul conceives the idea of painting a picture of the Madonna. He sends for a professional model and she is just donning her costume when Paul is called away on urgent business. He tells her to wait as he will be back shortly. He is delayed until dark, however, and the model falls asleep in the dressing room. While Marie is performing her usual devotions before the Madonna, Guido pries open the window and stealthily enters. Marie hears him and as he is about to take the silver Madonna, she grabs his arm with a scream. The door is flung wide and the model, awoken by the scream, stands in her Madonna robes, in a blaze of light. Filled with superstitious terror, the awe-struck

man rushes from the place. Marie at first thinks it is the Madonna herself and kneels reverently. The model lifts her up and explains who she is, sympathetically assuring the child she need not fear. Marie feels sure that her mother's words have come true and gratefully offers up a little prayer for her safe deliverance.

* * * * *

Captain Alvarez

[Taylor's role: "Robt. W. Wainwright (Captain Alvarez)"]

Robert Wainwright, arriving in the Argentine Republic to look after his father's business, finds himself in a red-hot revolution. He falls in love with Bonita, niece of Don Arana, foreign minister to Rosas, the tyrant. Bonita favors the rebels and through Wainwright's love for her, wins him to their cause. He communicates with General Urguiza, the rebel leader, but the messenger is intercepted by Tirzo, Rosas' spy. Tirzo is an aspirant to the hand of Bonita and to get Wainwright out of the way, suggests it would be well for him to leave the country at once.

Wainwright takes passage on the first ship leaving for the north, but secretly swims ashore immediately after the vessel leaves port. He returns to Don Arana's home and acquaints Bonita with his plan to join the rebels. Wainwright, as a rebel leader under the name "Captain Alvarez," so distinguishes himself that he becomes the scourge of the Federals. He is commissioned by General Urguiza to arrange with Don Arana, who is secretly in sympathy with the rebels, for the capture of a convoy of a million in currency dispatched to the Federal forces.

While they are talking the house is surrounded by Federals through the work of Tirzo, and Alvarez is led off a prisoner. Tirzo promises Bonita to save Alvarez's life if she will marry him. She is about to consent when word comes that the prisoner has escaped by an appalling ride over a native foot bridge on Mephisto, a wonderful horse given him by Bonita. Alvarez returns

to Bonita's home, tells her of the convoy and promises to return again at midnight to make sure of her safety.

Alvarez and his command capture the million in currency and he leaves to keep his midnight appointment, when he hears Tirzo plotting with a band of gypsies to kidnap Bonita. Alvarez arrives at Don Arana's first. Tirzo enters alone and in a fight the spy is killed and his body carried off by the gypsies. A band of Federals stop them, recognize Tirzo and rush to Don Arana's house, where they capture Alvarez. He is ordered shot at sunrise. The Federals are defeated and Rosas, the tyrant, flees for his life. The rebel forces arrive in time to save Captain Alvarez and all ends victoriously.

Don Osborn

As indicated in TAYLORLOGY 85, convicted blackmailer Don Osborn was linked to Margaret Gibson, who reportedly made a deathbed confession to the Taylor murder. The following are some clippings pertaining to Osborn's blackmail conviction. [Thanks to Richard Rosenberg for providing several of the clippings.]

* * * * *

October 25, 1923
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Angelenos Will Face Ohio Court

Arraignment of Don Osborne and Miss Rose Putnam, residents of Los Angeles, upon a conspiracy to blackmail John L. Bushnell, a multi-millionaire banker at Springfield, O., is scheduled for tomorrow, according to advices

received yesterday from Cincinnati.

They have been removed to the Hamilton County jail from Troy, O., following indictment by the United States grand jury. An extensive list of witnesses from many parts of the United States, including Los Angeles, were heard.

Bushnell is a son of a former governor of Ohio, Asa Bushnell. He was a witness before the Federal grand jury.

At the time of their arrest in Dayton, Osborne, who also was known as Putman, and the woman are said to have admitted that they extorted \$10,000 from Bushnell. They are believed to have left Los Angeles in July of last year, going direct to Springfield.

Osborne is said to be the woman's uncle. She is about 30 years of age and he is slightly younger.

* * * * *

October 31, 1923

CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

Blackmailers Enter Pleas of Guilty

Don Osborn and Rose Putnam, alias Rose O. Cooly, Los Angeles, Cal, who were indicted by the recent Federal Grand Jury on charges growing out of alleged attempt to blackmail John L. Bushnell, Springfield (Ohio) banker, and son of the late Asa S. Bushnell, Springfield, former Governor of Ohio, came before United States District Judge Smith Hickenlooper yesterday and pleaded guilty to charges of having entered into conspiracies to violate Federal laws.

Osborn was sentenced to serve 21 months in the Federal Penitentiary at Atlanta, Ga., and was fined \$500 and costs. Miss Putnam was sentenced to serve six months in Miami County Jail, at Troy, Ohio, where she and Osborn have been confined since their arrest last July following an alleged second attempt to obtain money from Bushnell.

Prior to their appearance before Judge Hickenlooper, it is said, both Osborn and Miss Putnam confessed to the Federal officials and, in Court, they told Judge Hickenlooper they were ready and willing to aid the Government by their testimony when others, alleged to have been associated with them, are apprehended and brought to trial.

W. A. Haines, Troy, Ohio, attorney for Miss Putnam, made a plea in behalf of his client. He said she was a victim of the men who engineered the scheme to blackmail Mr. Bushnell under threats of criminal prosecution under the Mann act, the same to be based upon Bushnell's alleged arrangement for Miss Putnam to journey from Los Angeles to Texas to meet him. He said Miss Putnam was but a tool of the men and that she was coerced into acting with them in furthering their scheme. He said she came from a prominent family whose reputation is of the highest.

In the courtroom at the time the defendants were given sentence were John M. Cole, Springfield, and Andrew Iddings, Dayton, Ohio, attorneys, who were retained by Mr. Bushnell to assist the Government officials. They, however, took no part in the proceedings.

Among others alleged to have been implicated with Miss Putnam and Don Osborn, who is said to be her uncle, are R. G. Madson and J. A. Ryan, who are said to have been with them at Springfield when the alleged attempts to blackmail Bushnell were made, and Albert S. Harris, Hollywood, Cal., who is in Hamilton County Jail, having been arrested three weeks ago following a third attempt to blackmail Bushnell.

According to officials, Harris sought to obtain \$25,000 from Bushnell to cover cash bonds for \$10,000 for Osborn and Miss Putnam for their release from Miami County Jail, and to pay their expenses out of the United States.

Matson and Ryan have not been apprehended.

* * * * *

March 7, 1924
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Ohio Blackmail Ring is Exposed

Twelve letters said to have been the basis of a blackmail plot against John L. Bushnell, Springfield (O.) banker and son of former Gov. Bushnell of that State, were seized yesterday by agents of the Department of Justice in a room at 744 South Bonnie Brae, according to Agent O. E. Meehan.

The seizure followed the arrest of Lawrence McClean by city police as a burglar suspect, and his asserted confession, to the surprise of the Federal agents, that he was a member of the blackmail gang. He had not been suspected, it was said.

The confession, according to Meehan, involved R. G. Sheridan, alias Blackie Madison, recently arrested in Los Angeles and now on his way to Cincinnati for trial, and others now under indictment in the United States District Court at Cincinnati.

By means of the letters, Meehan said, the gang extorted \$10,000 from the Ohio banker and made attempts to obtain \$100,000 and then \$30,000 more.

Bushnell had been tricked into paying \$10,000 for a package of blank paper, the agent said, and instead of meeting further demands sought the indictment of the gang.

The letters are asserted to have been written by Bushnell to Rose Cooley, alias Rose Putman, who formerly lived at 2775 Beechwood Avenue with her uncle, Dan Osborne, alias H. L. Putman. The woman and Herbert I. Ross were convicted recently at Cincinnati, Meehan said, and are serving sentences at Atlanta penitentiary.

A sixth member of the asserted gang is being sought by the Federal agents. McClean is said to have told Agent Meehan he had been worried by the arrest of Sheridan and decided to make a clean breast of all he knew. He will be arraigned today before United States Commissioner Long.

* * * * *

March 30, 1924

Asserted Blackmail Chief Held

John A. Ryan, accused leader of a blackmail plot against John L. Bushnell, Springfield (O.) banker and son of former Gov. Bushnell of that State, has been arrested by Federal agents in Chicago, Lucian C. Wheeler, agent in charge of the Bureau of Investigation in Los Angeles, reported yesterday. Ryan is under indictment in Cincinnati together with Lawrence McClean and R. G. Sheridan arrested recently in Los Angeles and returned to Cincinnati.

Ryan is said to be the sixth and last member of the asserted blackmail gang to be arrested. Rose Cooley, alias Rose Putman, who formerly lived at 2575 Beechwood Avenue with her uncle, Dan Osborne, and Herbert I. Ross were convicted on the blackmail charge at Cincinnati and are serving sentences in the Atlanta penitentiary, according to Agent O. E. Meehan of the Bureau of Investigation, who apprehended McClean and Sheridan. Osberne, alias H. L. Putman, is said also to be under indictment with Ryan and the others...

[Note: As indicated in the clippings above, there were various reported spellings for Putnam, Putman; Osborn, Osborne; Dan, Don; etc.]

The First Fictionalization of the Taylor Murder

The first fictionalization of the Taylor murder was published less than two weeks after the murder, when the following story by mystery writer Isabel Ostrander was syndicated to many newspapers.

* * * * *

February 14, 1922

Isabel Ostrander

MILWAUKEE JOURNAL

Detective Story Author "Solves" Taylor Murder

(Isabel Ostrander, world-famed author of detective stories, has written a novelette based on the Taylor movie murder, in which she uses her detective ability to work out in fiction her "solution" of the mystery!

This story was written by Isabel Ostrander after careful study of all reports of developments in the Taylor investigation. It is the first time such a story has been done by a famous American author so soon after such a tragedy.

Is Isabel Ostrander's solution right? Has the author of The Primal Law, The Claw in the Air, The Step on the Stairs and other mystery stories, worked out the correct answer?)

"What's the real dope, chief?" Capt. Hoey of the homicide bureau asked as he and his superior skimmed in a swift little runabout over the road toward Hollywood. "I know that Fowler was the theatrical wizard of his day and this new play he was about to produce has been hailed as his crowning triumph, but where did he come from?"

"That's a nice little lead, Hoey, but it won't get you anywhere," the chief replied dryly. "It happens that about fifteen years ago John Evans Fowler was Jordan Everitt Foster with a family and a swell social position. We dug up his picture from the morgue this morning, sent out broadcast at the time of his disappearance. It had me going until I got in touch with Frisco and learned that his family and former associates had been wise to his change of name for a couple of years and had let him slide. There's no mystery

there, no suggestion of enmity or financial trouble, no woman in the case."

"There have been plenty since," Capt. Hoey observed. "They were plumb dippy about him, especially the three that he made famous. He never seems to have fallen for any of them, though, or a bullet might have reached him before it did last night. He made a star of Justine Reverre, turned Pierrette Howard from a rough soubrette into the cleverest comedienne on the screen today, according to the critics, and put Winnie Willis in the forefront in the ingenue class. They were all to be in this new picture, weren't they?"

"And all three of them were out here at his dinner party last night," Chief Newton nodded. "That doesn't prove anything, though; Reverre is wrapped up in her career, Pierrette makes her way with no favors and little Winnie Willis has announced her engagement to that young millionaire, Jason Brooks."

"Who else were in the party?" asked Hoey.

"Only two actors, newcomers to the company, but there was one uninvited guest who put in a tardy appearance; at least, he was seen sneaking out of the back door by Mrs. Maxwell--who has the next bungalow--immediately after the shot was fired, and two minutes later another neighbor met him three blocks nearer the trolley line." The chief's tone was significant. "Both of them recognized him as Oren Beach, a fellow who sponged on Fowler for months and then forged his name to a couple of checks. Fowler forgave the first offense but when the second check turned up he swore out a warrant for Beach's arrest. Looks like an open-and-shut case to me when we land him."

"Why didn't Mrs. Maxwell start an investigation when she heard the shot?" Hoey was discreetly noncommittal.

"Thought it was the backfire of one of the motor cars," responded his superior, adding, "Here we are."

The announcement was superfluous as he pulled up in the space which had been kept clear for him before a pretty, low-roofed bungalow snuggled between two more pretentious ones in the heart of the colony, for a milling crowd of men and women were surging about it and a score or more of cars were parked

along the boulevard.

"Get the furs and the diamonds!" Hoey remarked in an undertone. "Looks like a society crush."

"Well, it ain't," his companion retorted. "They're the top-notchers of the movie world, though. Come on."

The front door at the left of the veranda opened as they elbowed their way through the crowd and a distinguished looking man with iron-grey hair appeared on the threshold. Capt. Hoey whistled softly.

"That's Paul Benedict, the traction king! What is he doing here?"

"Backing the new film; his first theatrical venture, I understand." The chief added as they mounted the steps: "Glad you received my message, Mr. Benedict. This is a mighty bad business."

"It is horrible, almost unbelievable!" the magnate replied in a low, shocked tone. "Young Brooks has been waiting with me in the dining room; in accordance with your orders we have not entered the study where poor Fowler was killed and the three ladies of the company who dined here last night are upstairs, I believe."

"All right, Mr. Benedict. We'll join you and Mr. Brooks shortly." The chief turned to his subordinate. "Go in and have a look around, Hoey."

He handed the other a key, motioning toward a door at the right and the detective entered. A chair had been overturned, a sinister stain clotted the rug between it and the desk and just at his feet the rug itself had been doubled back. A shimmer of white showed beneath it and Hoey stooped for a moment before advancing into the room. Some twenty minutes later he emerged and quietly letting himself out by the front door he skirted the house, examining the ground with each step. Re-entering the house once more he came upon a negro manservant, who started violently.

"You are Hiram Timmons, Mr. Fowler's valet?" he demanded without preamble.

"Yassuh, ah' cook, too. He lives--I mean, he lived--real simple out here ceptin' when he gave a dinner like last night and then the caterers come, but I done got 'em all out befo' I went home myself."

"The guests had all gone, too?" Hoey persisted. "Tell me the order in which they left. Who went first?"

"The two gentlemen, suh. Then Mis' Reverre and then little Mis' Willis. Po' Mistuh Fowler was just escortin' the last one, Mis' Howard, to her car when I started for home aftuh puttin' the study to rights."

"Did you see anyone outside?"

"Nossuh, nobody but Mr. Oren Beach, who used to visit Mr. Fowler."

"Then you know him?"

"Reckon I does." Hiram's tone was scathing. "Spent mos' of my time pickin' up his cigarette butts all oveh the place!"

"Then you ought to know what brand he smoked." Hoey laughed indifferently.

"Done roll his own, in brown paper!" The cook-valet sniffed and then cocked an anxious ear upward. "Spec' one of the ladies havin' hysterics!"

An unmistakable sound of feminine weeping had drifted down to them and in another moment Hoey had sprung lightly up the stairs and knocked upon the door from behind which it came. A soft, reluctant footstep reached his ears and the door opened to reveal a demure little blonde with tear-drenched eyes.

"Oh, please let me go home!" she wailed. "This dreadful place will drive me mad!"

"In just a minute, Miss Willis," Hoey replied gently. "You dined here last night. Did Mr. Fowler escort you to your car?"

"Yes. The--the very last thing he said to me was that he was going to be proud of me in his new production! Oh, I can't bear to talk about it! He--he was almost like a father to me!"

She broke into tumultuous sobbing once more and the detective could get nothing further from her but he had seen enough to satisfy him. Tapping upon the door across the hall he found himself confronted by the wide-eyed, piquant face of the comedienne, Pierrette Howard. There were traces of tears upon it but she replied to his questions in a low, steady tone. She had been the last of the guests to leave on the preceding evening, had remained for a few moments to talk over her part. The tragedy was naturally a frightful

shock to her, for she and Mr. Fowler had been the best of pals for ages. No, certainly there had never been anything of a sentimental nature between them. Was she at liberty to return to her home?

As she asked the question a masculine voice sounded from below and she shrank back, shutting the door almost in the detective's face. He shrugged slightly and turned to a door at the end of the hall.

A contralto voice in tones of studied tragedy bade him enter and the stately figure of the famous star, Justine Revelle, arose slowly from a couch. Her classic but somewhat mature features were as immobile as though carved in marble and they did not change as she assured her questioner that she had looked upon Mr. Fowler as the master who had revealed her genius to the world when she had all but given up hope of recognition. It was evident that she meant to talk of nothing but herself and Hoey at length withdrew and descended to the dining room.

There the chief presented him to a tall, narrow-shouldered youth with a vapid face upon which an expression of stunned horror was stamped. Jason Brooks hadn't known Fowler, poor chap, very well, but he admired him immensely. No, he had not been invited to the dinner, but had spent the evening at the club as the doorman, stewards and a dozen of his friends could testify.

"And you, Mr. Benedict? You did not dine here either?" Hoey turned to the traction king.

"No. I remained in my own rooms as my man will tell you," Benedict replied, taking a handkerchief from his pocket and rubbing it nervously between his hands as he spoke. "I had some important papers to look over--!"

"Very good, sir. Chief, Mrs. Maxwell and the other witness were right." Hoey turned to his superior. "Oren Beach was here last night."

"I told you it was an open-and-shut--" Chief Newton began but paused at something in the other's expression.

"He was here but outside the window of this room, looking through that door which leads into the study. Here are six stubs of his own peculiar cigarettes which he smoked there while he watched a scene in which he had no

part. Mr. Brooks, you have loyal friends who will swear to your alibi but you dropped half of one of your cuff links as you crouched beneath the desk in that room last night. Its monogram is identical with that of the old-fashioned seal you are wearing on your watch chain."

Brooks cowered back, his ashen face suddenly gray.

"I swear--I swear I didn't kill him!" he gasped. "I was jealous, foolishly and without cause, and I came to have it out with him but I didn't fire the shot--I didn't even know who did! I slipped in while he and Miss Howard were talking in the dining room and hid under the desk when he escorted her out. Someone else came in and I thought it was he returning, but it--it wasn't. From where I crouched I could see only the feet of the intruder, but they were not Fowler's. He came in a minute after, though, and without a word the shot was fired and he fell. The--the other man went out at once but it seemed ages until I could get up courage enough to go, too, and slam the door behind me so that the spring lock would catch. I did not even have a revolver with me--"

"It is an odd coincidence that your name and that of the man who watched outside would have commenced with the same letter. Beach and Brooks--and Benedict." Hoey wheeled suddenly upon the latter. "Be careful, Mr. Benedict, that when you put that handkerchief back in your pocket it remains there and does not fall to the floor as another one did last night; another with an initial identical with that on the handkerchief you are holding now!"

As he spoke he whipped from his own pocket the square of white linen which he had picked up from beneath the edge of the rug in the study and the chief lunged forward with a hoarse cry of warning as the financier reeled.

Recovering himself he extended his hands with a slight smile and disclosed in the folds of the handkerchief which he himself held a tiny, gleaming instrument like a miniature hypodermic needle.

"This one was not empty, you see," he remarked quietly. "I came prepared and when you entered the room just now I knew from your face that the game was up, but I hardly expected you to work so fast. Never mind why I did it, nor why a man of my years who has never known love for a woman before

should wander into the field of the films to find it after all the tinsel
sham which it is! Young Brooks here could not have fired the shot from
beneath the desk, of course; you deduced that from the angle at which the
bullet was sped. I do not regret." His voice had weakened all at once and
he felt blindly for a chair into which the chief assisted him.

After a moment Benedict went on:

"I am going now, I think. It was fate that we should have the same
initial letter for our surnames; of course it had to be one of us three!"

Injury and Illness in 1914 Hollywood

1914 was the year that William Desmond Taylor first began directing
movies. The following brief contemporary items give glimpses into illness
and injury in the silent film industry in Southern California during that
year. All of the following items are datelined from Los Angeles.

* * * * *

January 24, 1914
MOTOGRAPHY

In a recent play put on by Henry McRae at the Universal ranch, a soldier
was told to throw a bomb at a certain time. When the time came Mr. McRae
instructed his company to keep their positions by shouting his usual "Hold
it." The soldier took this to himself and the bomb exploded in his hand. It
was fortunately a "prop" bomb, but even then it singed his eyebrows and hair.

* * * * *

February 20, 1914

VARIETY

Belle Bennett, leading woman, Balboa Feature Films Co., after an operation for appendicitis, has left the hospital where she has been confined in Los Angeles.

* * * * *

April 11, 1914

MOVING PICTURE WORLD

A fierce fire broke out March 13th in the Keystone laboratory at Los Angeles, Cal, and did considerable damage before the flames could be extinsuished. Two printing machines were ruined, besides two finished pictures that were made at the Santa Monica Broncho Studio. Bret Hunn distinguished himself in fighting the fire. Manager Brandt, of the film department, was severely burned about the hands while fighting the fire. Much valuable film was saved.

* * * * *

April 11, 1914

MOVING PICTURE WORLD

While Francis Ford, and the company, with Grace Cunard were in San Diego doing some airship scenes for the Lucille Love series, one of the dependents of Ford was injured. Ernest W. Field was the man who fell twenty-five feet on the rocks down the coast. His skull was nearly fractured and he suffered a severe shaking up.

* * * * *

April 25, 1914

MOVING PICTURE WORLD

Wallace Reid, who has been conducting his own company, has been sick for

a week owing to a bad sprain which he received while riding a cayuse up at the American ranch. He rode a horse some time ago and sprained his back again which made him unable to work of late.

* * * * *

April 24, 1914
MOVING PICTURE WORLD

What might have been caused the Francis Ford company of Universal players to turn their heads and hide their faces with dread when Miss Essie Fay, who is the only one who goes into the lion's den at the ranch, was caught in the trap-door as one of the lionesses made a spring for her. The cameramen who were outside the cage threw rocks at the old lion, but missed a shot and hit a lioness, who instantly became enraged and jumped for the girl. She sprang to the door and as it closed the body of the animal hit it and hastened its closing, smashing her hand in the crack and badly bruising it. She tugged it out, only after the huge paw of the beast had barely scraped it.

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May 15, 1914
VARIETY

Enid Markey, of the New York M. P. Corporation, is recovering from injuries received during the taking of "The Wrath of the Gods."

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May 15, 1914
VARIETY

Los Angeles, May 13.--While taking part in a "picture arrest" downtown, yesterday, Robert Vernon, playing an Italian fugitive, was severely clubbed

by the "officer" and had to be removed to the hospital.

May 16, 1914

MOVING PICTURE WORLD

Closely following the death of William Warner Kirby, the actor-trainer, who died of blood poisoning caused by his being mauled by a lioness, the beast was shot, at the order of the officials of the Universal Company. The unfortunante happening will no doubt serve as a sinister example in future handling of these dangerous felines.

May 22, 1914

VARIETY

Wilfred Lucas is recuperating from a broken shoulder.

May 29, 1914

VARIETY

Nick Cogley (Keystone), injured several weeks ago, is still propelling himself on crutches.

May 29, 1914

VARIETY

Joe Swickward, a picture actor, is in a Los Angeles hospital with a broken ankle, sustained while appearing before the camera.

* * * * *

June 5, 1914

VARIETY

Dustin Farnum, long a hero on the legitimate stage, enrolled himself as a real (also reel) hero at Escondido, Cal., when he saved the life of Miss Winifred Kingston, his leading woman. Miss Kingston was participating in the making of the photoplay, "The Virginian," when she missed her footing and fell into a river at a point where the water ran to a depth of 12 feet. In the fall she struck her head against a piece of driftwood and was stunned. Farnum, who was only a few feet away, hastily cast off his coat and plunged into the water, swimming to shore with the actress on his back. A great crowd of onlookers had gathered to see the pictures players at work, and wild cheers greeted the leading man's act of heroism. It is doubtful if Farnum ever received a bigger "hand" in all his career as a matinee idol.

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June 6, 1914

MOVIE PICTORIAL

Poor "Jackie" Saunders of the Balboa Company came in contact with some poison ivy when doing a forest scene, and her pretty face has been swollen to double its size. At one time fears were entertained for her eyesight. However, she is much better already.

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June 12, 1914

VARIETY

The contract held by Marie Dressler with the Keystone Picture Co. has been canceled as the result of an accident that befell Miss Dressler while standing on the pier at Venice during the taking of a film. She fell into

the sea and was rescued by the guards, but will be incapacitated for some time, and may be internally injured.

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June 19, 1914
VARIETY

Los Angeles, June 17.--Harry Spears, a Majestic studio director and well known, died here, after a lingering illness. The funeral was conducted by the picture players.

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June 19, 1914
VARIETY

Jerry Grant, cowboy of Kay Bee, was seriously burned by a lariat while appearing in a picture in Santa Monica.

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June 26, 1914
VARIETY

Carmen Phillips was injured quite severely while appearing in the "Damon and Pythias" picture at Universal City last week. She slipped and fell, spraining her left knee, while dashing in front of the camera.

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June 20, 1914
MOVIE PICTORIAL

Cleo Madison had her feet very badly burned in the fire scene in "The Girl and the Feud." When she returned to work again, she fainted and the

doctor forbade her to do anything until she was in better shape.

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July 3, 1914

VARIETY

Marie Dressler, recently injured at Keystone, is about recovered.

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July 17, 1914

VARIETY

Marshall Neilan, Kalem director, at Hollywood, is recovering from a severe case of poisoning through drinking desert water.

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July 24, 1914

VARIETY

Charles E. Van Loan, newspaper man, author of baseball stories and scenario writer, was severely injured last week when the auto in which he was riding plunged from Skyline road, in San Bernardino. His jaw was broken and he received internal injuries.

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July 25, 1914

MOTION PICTURE NEWS

By an accident Porter Strong, of the R. B. Film Corporation Comedy company, was run over by an automobile. According to the script, there was to be an explosion, the hood of the machine flying off. Strong, who was standing in the machine, should fall forward onto the radiator; and the

machine start forward. Everything worked out correctly, except the fall by Strong, who went on over and could not get out of the way of the machine. The fly-wheel caught on Strong's clothing, and for a moment--while the auto was passing over him--members of the company thought it would be necessary to pick him up in a market basket. Aside from bruises he was not injured.

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July 25, 1914

MOTION PICTURE NEWS

G. A. Beranger, assistant to D. W. Griffith, of the Majestic Company, at the Hollywood, Cal., studio, is being termed the hero by all members of the company, as the result of an accident, while riding his new Indian motorcycle, on the speedway at Venice, Cal., with a side-car attached, in which were three girls of the company. To prevent the side-car from being hit by an auto, Beranger ran into an automobile on his left. His foot was badly mashed and a piece of the pedal penetrated the instep fully one inch.

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July 25, 1914

MOTION PICTURE NEWS

In the filming of "Even Unto Death," at Catalina Islands, this week, Miss Dot Farley, leading woman of the Albuquerque Film Company, was washed off a large rock by a big swell at an unexpected moment, and when the motor boat captain near by at the time refused to drive his craft among the seal rocks, fearing it would be dashed to pieces, Director Gilbert P. Hamilton jumped in and rescued the popular picture star. Miss Farley was unconscious for some time after being rescued, and by members of the company it is considered marvelous that she was rescued because of the whirlpools between the rocks and the strong undertow. Twice Mr. Hamilton was sucked down in whirlpools, and both times was battered against rocks. As a result his legs

were badly bruised and cut in a number of places.

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August 7, 1914

VARIETY

Lou Carter, who had a very bad accident a few weeks ago, is back at work again, fully recovered.

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August 7, 1914

VARIETY

Sydney de Gray is recovering from an illness on the Coast. He expects to be back with the Pathe within a week or so.

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August 8, 1914

MOVIE PICTORIAL

I record with regret the death of Sydney Diamond on July the ninth. He was assisting Mack Sennett at the time he was taken to the hospital suffering with cancer of the stomach. Poor Sydney was with the Majestic and Universal before joining the Keystone and was well known on the coast as a stock actor.

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August 7, 1914

VARIETY

Edna Goodrich, a professional swimmer, nearly lost her life while appearing in a picture being taken on the (Nat) Goodwin Pier at Santa Monica, Cal.

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August 7, 1914

VARIETY

Lloyd Hamilton (Kalem) is recovering from injuries sustained by a recent bad fall.

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August 14, 1914

VARIETY

Louise Glaum has reported for duty after a somewhat trying illness.

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August 16, 1914

NEW YORK TELEGRAPH

Cleo Madison continues her fine work in "The Trey o' Hearts" and steadily refuses to have any "double" to substitute for her. The result is that she is getting more than her fair share of misadventure. She came perilously near to drowning recently when the boat she was supposed to push through the breakers and so escape turned turtle and she could not get from under. Wilfred Lucas, George Larkin and the other men present went to her rescue and she was unconscious when pulled to shore, but she did the "retake" the following day despite protests. Her work in "The Trey o' Hearts" puts the stamp upon her abilities.

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August 22, 1914

MOVIE PICTORIAL

Bess Meredyth is with us once more after her severe treatment to ward off rabies. She says she still feels rather dopey but is all right otherwise.

August 22, 1914
MOTION PICTURE NEWS

Art Gibson, of the Sterling comedy company, was shot in the hand a few days ago, the wad of the blank cartridge penetrating to between the bones of the palm. The injured member was dressed at the Universal hospital.

August 29, 1914
MOTION PICTURE NEWS

Phillip Walsh of the Universal scenario department was run down by an automobile last Saturday evening while going to his home, and has since been in a local hospital in a critical condition.

September 4, 1914
VARIETY

Velma Pearce is recovering from an illness in a hospital near Los Angeles.

September 4, 1914
VARIETY

The accident record goes to Stella Razeto of Selig's. She has been

injured four times in as many weeks.

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September 5, 1914

MOTION PICTURE NEWS

Henry Walthall and Fred Burns, as commanders of the Ku-Klux Klan, in the filming of "The Clansman," by D. W. Griffith, put on the most exciting chase seen, near Whittier, last week, when the horse Walthall was riding ran away. Because of his weak condition--having been out of the hospital for but a week following a serious illness--the favorite actor could not control the charger. Director Griffith and Cameraman G. W. Bitzer were ahead in an automobile and the machine registered a speed of forty-three miles per hour for fully a mile. Fred Burns, formerly head cowboy for Buffalo Bill's Wild West, finally caught the horse Walthall was riding and was able to stop it before the actor was injured. In the scenes taken at Whittier 175 horses and three hundred men were used.

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September 12, 1914

MOTION PICTURE NEWS

Jack Kerrigan is hobbling about the big U studio on cutches, following a scratch on the foot and the development of blood poisoning. But Jack is not allowed to take a vacation because of the need of crutches. Director Jacques Jaccard was horrified when he learned of the condition of his lead and furthermore saw a week's lay off for himself and company. Then he began writing a scenario for a picture in which Kerrigan could use his crutch, swollen foot, and general illness to advantage. The company is producing "The Proof of a Man," and many of the players about the studio think Kerrigan is merely acting with his crutch. The picture is laid in Chinatown of San Francisco.

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September 11, 1914

VARIETY

Anna Little is recuperating from an illness at her Long Beach home.

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September 11, 1914

VARIETY

Douglas Gerrard recently underwent an operation on his ear. He is still in the hospital.

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September 18, 1914

VARIETY

Bess Meredyth is quite ill at her Hollywood (Cal.) home as a result of attending a dog that was infected with rabies.

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September 18, 1914

VARIETY

Gertrude Short, the 11-year-old star of the Santa Monica Vitagraph Studio, who broke a leg several months ago, will soon again be seen on the screen.

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September 19, 1914

MOVING PICTURE WORLD

D. W. Griffith has a sunburned pate. What caused it? Well, to get the proper atmosphere for "The Clansman" he shaved his head to show his good faith in getting the men who worked in the picture to cut their locks. He wears a hat without a crown, and of course without his hair he became well burned while directing out under the sunny California skies. He puts cold cream on it every night, but no grease paint.

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September 19, 1914

MOTION PICTURE NEWS

Mrs. Chauncey Ward, character woman for the Sterling Motion Picture company was badly maimed when a Hollywood-Los Angeles street car on which she was riding, collided with a heavy truck, and it will be several weeks before she will be able to appear before the camera. Lon Chaney, of the Universal, passed a moment after the accident happened, and by experience gained in motion picture accidents rendered first aid to the injured.

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October 10, 1914

VARIETY

Adele Lane, who was bit by a bear recently, soon will be back at work.

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October 17, 1914

VARIETY

Irene Hunt has fully recovered from her injury received in a picture fall, and is back with D. W. Griffith.

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November 7, 1914

MOTION PICTURE NEWS

Inceville, the New York Motion Picture company's studio at Santa Monica canyon, was threatened with destruction by fire the past week, during the production of an underworld story by Scott Sidney. A large portion of one set was lighted in order to secure realistic effects, believing that it would be possible for the stage hands to extinguish it without difficulty. Everything being dry the fire gained headway very speedily and was spreading to other sets before it was gotten under control. Harry G. Koenan, an actor, was badly burned about the hands and arms.

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November 15, 1914

NEW YORK TELEGRAPH

Starting home after the Photoplay's Vaudeville, Jacques Jaccard's automobile skidded, and he and Bobby Ross, the technical man, were thrown out, and the latter sustained a bad scalp wound, which took seven stitches to sew up. He was on hand for work on the Monday morning, however.

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November 22, 1914

NEW YORK TELEGRAPH

At the Bosworth studios I learn that Hobart Bosworth is quite sick, much to every one's regret.

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November 28, 1914

MOTION PICTURE NEWS

Marie Walcamp, of the 101 Bison U Company, was painfully clawed by King, the big lion at Universal zoo, last week, when the beast struck her shoulder with his hind foot while jumping over her body during the making of a picture. Five stitches were required.

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November 28, 1914

VARIETY

Ralph Lewis is laid up with a crippled foot as a result of an accident sustained while appearing in D. W. Griffith's "The Clansman."

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December 12, 1914

VARIETY

Helen Holmes is ill. She is threatened with pneumonia.

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December 12, 1914

VARIETY

Charles Clary is receiving the jibes and taunts of his friends these days. The other week he was driving a mule in a picture when the mule ran away and Charles was quite badly bruised.

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December 19, 1914

VARIETY

J. P. McGowan, the director, is still in the hospital as a result of his

fall from a telegraph pole, and his physician fears he may be paralyzed.

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December 26, 1914

MOTION PICTURE NEWS

Dorothy Gish, the Griffith-Mutual star, in full view of the studio crowd at Hollywood was struck by a racing automobile and dragged over forty feet before the big machine could be stopped. Her horrified friends rushed down the road to her, found her unconscious, and among those who helped lift her into the ambulance when it came was D. W. Griffith, who has done so much to make the younger Gish sister a popular star on the Mutual program. The director rode to Los Angeles with her, and her many other friends followed her there as best they could, by trolley, motor or carriage, as the case might be. At the hospital surgeons discovered that the little Mutual star had had her left side very badly torn and one toe cut off. It looked like a very bad case, but after several hours she began to rest more easily, and when Mr. Griffith finally came out and announced that she would live, but that it might be several weeks before she would be able to work again, Dorothy Gish's friends breathed a sigh of deep relief.

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December 26, 1914

MOVING PICTURE WORLD

The crisis was passed in the siege against typhoid-pneumonia which Ford Sterling was waging with his great constitution, and now the popular comedian is past danger, but he looks rather battleworn, for he lost close to 22 pounds in the fight for his life. He will be out again in a few weeks and back to work.

"PERFECT CRIMES? Nickell/Taylor"

by Ray Long

In mid-September 1999, Bruce Long contacted me asking if I'd allow him to give my e-mail address to a documentary producer based at Santa Monica, California. The unsolved murder of William Desmond Taylor was to be the subject of his production.

Several days later I was contacted by this producer. At first I was hesitant to divulge what knowledge I might have about the case. After some prodding, I acquiesced and let the proverbial "cat out of the bag."

I was then asked to do an on-camera interview which I agreed to do on October 8 during one of my periodic visits to the Los Angeles basin. During the interview, I made several statements which would prove erroneous. I had ASSUMED that Ms Gibson/Palmer/Lewis conducted herself in an ethical manner during her lifetime with the exception of a brief lapse on February 1, 1922. That was a big mistake. Subsequent revelations proved contrary.

It now appears that some of my assumptions were inaccurate. Where I assumed that she had changed her name in 1917 for professional reasons, we learned that she'd been arrested for prostitution and vagrancy (working in a house of prostitution). Despite overwhelming evidence of her guilt, she was acquitted by a jury (reminiscent of the Simpson jury?). Regardless of the outcome of that trial, she could no longer appear in front of the camera as Margaret Gibson (her birth name). I gave this interview prior to revelations in the January 2000 issue of Taylorology.

Whereas I assumed that she'd been infatuated with the director, it now appears more likely that she had attempted to blackmail him because of his sexual preferences. With the events at the Saint Francis Hotel over the Labor Day Weekend 1921 painting the public press bright pink, it would appear that she seized this opportunity to threaten the director with exposure if he didn't meet her demands. And it would appear that Taylor declined to meet

those demands and was taking steps to see that Ms. Gibson-Palmer enjoyed an extended stay at the Hotel Gray Bar.

We also learned that Ms Gibson-Palmer was arrested in 1923 on a Federal charge for being part of a nation-wide extortion ring. The case was dismissed after the Federal Attorney learned that the complainant and principal witness might have violated the Mann Act by transporting Ms Gibson/Palmer across a state line into Mexico. In the "moral" climate of 1923, this alone should have been the coup de grace to Gibson-Palmer's theatrical career. Somehow, her filmography continues into 1929.

Several errors crept into the documentary and I don't know their source. Contrary to all known biographies, according to a 1900 census document furnished to me by the Denver Public Library, Margaret Gibson was born in Kansas, September 14, 1896.

"Rounding up the Law" the film she made with "Big Boy" Williams in late 1921 was not a serial. It was a five reel "oater" filmed in Weir Canyon on land which is now the bottom of the upper Hollywood Reservoir. Several scenes were shot along Dark Canyon Road which is now Barham Boulevard. The town scenes appear to have been shot at Mixville. There are several scenes which could have been shot in front of any house in Hollywood during that period.

Margaret Gibson's first theatrical appearance was at Alex Pantages' Vaudeville house in Denver, Colorado during the spring and summer of 1910. She would have been fourteen years old. During June of that year, Taylor appeared on the stage of the Tabor Grand Theater just down the street. She migrated west to Santa Monica California in 1912. Her mother appears to have been a "stage mother" and just as much a buzzardess as Charlotte Shelby. Interestingly, Taylor appears to have found his way to Thomas Ince's beach front facility in Santa Monica also in 1912.

By the time she reached the age of 18 on September 14, 1914, she'd already played opposite William Desmond Taylor in four films for Vitagraph.

How she supported herself over the years, I don't know. The parts she played in her post-1922 films probably required no more than a couple days at

most to film. Working in one or two films a year didn't provide her with much income yet she resided in a relatively affluent neighborhood and enjoyed the fruits of a higher standard of living. We can only speculate. Was she engaged in prostitution? Narcotics? Extortion? We'll probably never know the answer.

However, something very traumatic happened to her in 1934. She suddenly found it necessary to flee the country taking the proverbial "slow boat to China." Actually she went to Singapore in the Straits Settlements. She had no money yet on February 9, 1935, she married one Elbert E. Lewis who happened to be auditor for Socony Vacuum Oil Company (Mobiloil). It would appear she met Mr. Lewis on the dock as her ship arrived in Singapore.

For the next five years, she enjoyed the "good life" accompanying her new spouse as he traveled around the Bay of Bengal from Ceylon to Borneo. For the era, they enjoyed a standard of living which would be the envy of a potentate. However this wasn't to last.

In late summer 1940, she developed a serious bladder infection that could not be treated in India. She did not wish to return to the United States for treatment. However, because of the war, Europe was out of the question. And with German surface raiders operating on the Indian Ocean (they'd already sunk one of the company's tankers) both Australia and South Africa were out of the question. Therefore she had no choice but to return to the United States traveling on Lewis' passport via Yokohama. (Pan American offered Clipper Service between Manila and San Francisco but she was afraid to fly).

Elbert Lewis was killed around March 15, 1942 during the bombing of a Socony Vacuum facility. Pat Lewis subsisted on a small pension from Socony later Mobil until her death in 1964. In 1949 she purchased a small house in Beachwood Canyon near the village with funds she received from Elbert's life insurance policy. An act of war clause voided the insurance, but Mobil paid it anyway.

During the fifteen years that I knew her she was reclusive to the extreme. Looking from hindsight, she must have been hiding something. She

was a very kind and considerate individual. Much of her time was spent gardening which she allowed vegetation to totally obscure the front of her home. Her only companion was a dark grey cat named "Rajah."

Now, there are more questions than ever. The first being the reason for her flight from the United States. She appears to have had another nom de guerre: Ella Margaret Arce. Could she have used this name during the early 1930s?

What about Edward King? He was a peripheral LAPD investigator during the early phases of the Taylor homicide. In 1930, he authored a magazine article which implied that Charlotte Shelby was the culprit. [NOTE: The rest of this paragraph should be disregarded. Ed King is not Eddie Baker.--Bruce Long] He was a sometime actor performing under the name Eddie Baker. In 1924 he appeared briefly in the film "Hold Your Breath" with Ms. Gibson-Palmer. He was the very first secretary-treasurer of the Screen Actors Guild. And for fifteen years he resided directly across the street from Ms. Gibson-Palmer. There was precisely one digit difference in their respective street addresses.

Among Pat Lewis' papers, there is an envelope postmarked January 1941. Written in pencil in what appears to be her mother's hand-writing is the home address and home telephone for "Sanderson." Leroy Sanderson handled the Taylor investigation for the LAPD from his office on the second floor of New City Hall between 1937 and 1941. Why?

At barely five foot, she was a mite of a woman but she could sure get herself into some mighty big trouble.

Back issues of Taylorology are available on the Web at any of the following:

<http://www.angelfire.com/az/Taylorology/>

<http://www.etext.org/Zines/ASCII/Taylorology/>

<http://www.silent-movies.com/Taylorology/>

Full text searches of back issues can be done at <http://www.etext.org/Zines/> or at <http://www.silent-movies.com/search.html>. For more information about

Taylor, see

WILLIAM DESMOND TAYLOR: A DOSSIER (Scarecrow Press, 1991)
